

10 4 6 3 2



POLITICAL PAPERS,

CHIEFLY RESPECTING THE

ATTEMPT OF THE COUNTY OF YORK,

AND OTHER

CONSIDERABLE DISTRICTS,

COMMENCED IN 1779, AND CONTINUED DURING SEVERAL
SUBSEQUENT YEARS, TO EFFECT A

REFORMATION

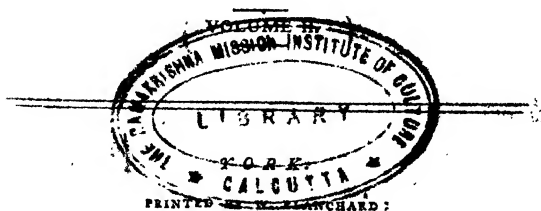
OF THE

PARLIAMENT OF GREAT-BRITAIN:

COLLECTED BY THE

Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,

CHAIRMAN OF THE LATE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION OF
THE COUNTY OF YORK.



SOLD BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, LONDON,

AND J. TODD, YORK.

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| R M I C LIBRARY | |
| Acc. No 104632 | |
| Class | |
| D | 14.11.79 |
| | Ch. |
| | ✓ |
| Cat. | ✓ |
| Re. Paid | Ch. |
| Checked | Ag |

CONTENTS

OF THE

SECOND VOLUME.

NUMBER IX.

CONTAINING, in nine Papers, some further Proceedings of the Committee of Association of the County of York, preparatory to a General Meeting of the County, on the 19th of December, 1782; their Report to that Meeting of their past Transactions; the Letter of Brads Crosby, Esq; to the Chairman of the Committee, with his Answer; the Proceedings and Debate at that General Meeting of the County; at which the first Petition for a Reform in the Representation of the People, was adopted by the County of York.

| | <i>Page,</i> |
|--|---------------|
| PAPER 1. Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 31st of October, 1782, | 2 |
| 2. A Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association of the County of York, presented to the General Meeting of the County, on the 19th day of December, 1782, | 5 |
| 3. Resolutions at an adjourned Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 1st of November, 1782, | 17 |
| 4. Letter by Brads Crosby, Esq; to the Rev. C. Wyvill, | 23 |
| 5. Letter by the Rev. C. Wyvill to Brads Crosby, Esq; | 45 |
| A 2 | 6. Resolution |

| | <i>Page.</i> |
|---|--------------|
| PAPER 6. Resolution at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 17th of December, 1782, | 33 |
| 7. Resolutions at the adjourned Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 18th of December, 1782, | 35 |
| 8. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th of December, 1782, | 38 |
| 9. Account of the Debate at that General Meeting, | 43 |

NUMBER X.

Containing, in twenty-eight Papers, Letters and Resolutions communicated from various Corporations, Committees, &c. in answer to the Circular Letter of the Committee of Association of the County of York, dated Nov. 1, 1782.

| | |
|--|----|
| PAPER 1. Letter from the Committee of Southwark to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 72 |
| 2. Resolutions of the Electors of Southwark, on the 21st day of November, 1782, | 74 |
| 3. Letter from the Mayor of Bideford to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 77 |
| 4. Letter from the Corporation of Tenby to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 78 |
| 5. Letter from the Lord Provost of Glasgow to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 82 |
| 6. Letter from the Committee of the County of Flint to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 86 |
| 7. Letter from the Mayor of Gloucester to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 88 |
| 8. Letter from the Sheriff of Moray to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 92 |
| 9. Letter from the Sheriff of Fife to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 94 |
| 10. Letter from the Constables of Manchester to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 95 |
| 11. Letter | |

CONTENTS.

v

| | <i>Page.</i> |
|---|--------------|
| PAPER II. Letter from the Mayor of Petersfield to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 97 |
| 12. Letter from the Mayor of Poole to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 98 |
| 13. Letter from the Commonalty of Poole to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 99 |
| 14. Letter from the Town Clerk of Hereford to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 102 |
| 15. Letter from the Chairman of the Westminster Committee to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 104 |
| 16. Letter from the Inhabitants of Tiverton to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 106 |
| 17. Resolutions of the Corporation of Leicester, | 108 |
| 18. Letter from the Town Clerk of York to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 110 |
| 19. Letter from the Mayor of Bedford to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 111 |
| 20. Letter from the Town Clerk of Bridport to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 112 |
| 21. Letter from J. Chubb, Esq; late Chairman of the Committee of Bridgewater to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 114 |
| 22. Letter from the Corporation of Tenby to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 117 |
| 23. Letter from the Town Clerk of Wellingford to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 120 |
| 24. Letter from the Mayor of Dartmouth to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 121 |
| 25. Letter from the Sussex Committee to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 122 |
| 26. Letter from the Corporation of Langport to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 126 |
| 27. Letter from the Huntingdonshire Committee of Association to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 128 |
| 28. Letter from the Port Reeve and Electors of Penryn to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 130 |

NUMBER XI.

NUMBER XI.

Containing, in nine Papers, an Account of the Proceedings of various Counties and other considerable Districts, relative to the measure proposed of Petitioning Parliament for a Reform in the Representation of the People; with some other Papers respecting the same subject.

Page.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|
| PAPER 1. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of Kent, on the 8th of June, 1782, | - | - | 136 |
| 2. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the City of Westminster, on the 17th day of July, 1782, | | | 141 |
| 3. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of Nottingham, on the 28th day of October, 1782, | | | 184 |
| 4. * Letter from J. Parry, Esq; to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York, Dec. 10th, 1782, | - | - | 210 |
| 5. * Petition of the County of Carnarven, | | | 211 |
| 6. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the Town of Bury, on the 2d of Jan. 1783, | - | - | 212 |
| 7. † Advertisement at a previous Meeting at Truro, on the 6th of Jan. 1783, | - | - | 216 |
| 8. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of Essex, on the 10th day of April, 1783, | | | 219 |
| 9. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of Suffex, on the 18th of Jan. 1782, | - | - | 224 |

* By a mistake in printing, these two Papers are connected together, and intitled Paper 5.

† For the Petition of the County of Cornwall, see ~~Vol. III.~~ at the beginning.

NUMBER XII.

Containing, in thirteen Papers, an Account of farther Proceedings by the Committee of Association of the County of York, their Letters to Sir G. Savile and Henry Duncombe, Esq; with the Answers of those Gentlemen;

all

Also a List of the active Promoters of a Petition in Yorkshire, for a Reform in the Representation; Mr. Pitt's Propositions on that subject in Parliament, on the 7th of May, 1783, and a List of Members who divided in favour of his Propositions.

| | <i>Page.</i> |
|--|--------------|
| PAPER I. Resolutions of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 19th day of Dec. 1782, | 234 |
| 2. Resolutions of that Committee, on the 21st day of December, 1782, | 236 |
| 3. Resolutions of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 20th day of Jan. 1783, | 239 |
| 4. Resolution of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 23d day of January, 1783; with a Letter by the Rev. C. Wyvill to the Dean of York annexed, | 240 |
| 5. Letter from the Committee of Middlesex to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 244 |
| 6. Resolution of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 17th day of Feb. 1783, | 248 |
| 7. Letter from J. Bell, Esq; to the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 252 |
| 8. Resolutions proposed by the Right Hon. William Pitt to the House of Commons, on the 7th of May, 1783, with a List of Members who voted with Mr. Pitt, | 253 |
| 9. Resolutions of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 1st day of October, 1783, | 257 |
| 10. Letter from the Chairman of that Committee to the Right Hon. William Pitt, | 263 |
| 11. Letter from the Right Hon. William Pitt to the Chairman of that Committee, | 264 |
| 12. Letter from the Chairman of that Committee to Sir G. Savile, | 265 |
| 13. Letter from the Chairman of that Committee to Henry Duncombe, Esq; | 267 |
| 14. Letter by Henry Duncombe, Esq; to the Chairman of that Committee, | 269 |

NUMBER XIII.

Containing, in thirteen Papers, farther measures of the Committee of Association of the County of York, and their Sub-Committee; their Second Report of their Proceedings, and a List of their Members; also Proceedings at two General Meetings of the County of York, viz. the first held the 17th day of December, 1783, at which the Resignation of Sir G. Savile as their Representative, was notified to the Freeholders, and his nephew F. F. Foljambe, was nominated to succeed him; and the Second held on the first day of January, 1784, at which Mr. Foljambe was elected to Represent the County.

Page.

| | |
|--|--------|
| PAPER I. Communication by the Rev. C. Wyvill, on the 26th of Nov. 1783, to the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, with Sir G. Savile's Letter to his Constituents announcing his Resignation, | 273 |
| 2. Resolution of that Sub-Committee, on the 10th of Dec. 1783, with various Letters annexed, | 276 |
| 3. Resolution of that Sub-Committee, on the 12th day of Dec. 1783, | 280 |
| 4. Resolutions of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 16th day of Dec. 1783, | 282 |
| 5. Proceedings of a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 17th day of Dec. 1783, | 285 |
| 6. Debate at that Meeting, | 287 |
| 7. Resolution of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 18th day of Dec. 1783, | 304 |
| 8. Resolutions of that Committee, on the 31st day of December, 1783, | 305 |
| 9. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 1st day of January, 1784, | 307 |
| 10. The Second Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association of the County of York, | 311 |
| 11. Resolution of that Committee, on the 2d day of January, 1784, | 318 |
| 12. List of Members of that Committee who after the 2d day of January, 1784, ordered their names to be withdrawn, | 320 |
| | 13. An |

CONTENTS.

ix

| | |
|--|----------------|
| PAPER 13. An Alphabetical List of that Committee previous to the Seccfion of Members, in 1784, | Page. - 322 |
|--|----------------|

NUMBER XIV.

Containing, in five Papers, farther Proceedings at two General Meetings of the County of York; the First of which, held on the 25th of March, resolved to Address the Throne in favour of those Ministers, who had maintained the Chartered Rights of the India Company; the Second held on the 10th of February, 1785, again Petitioned Parliament for a Reform of the Representation; with an Account of the Debate in Parliament on Mr. Pitt's Motion on that subject, on the 28th of April, 1785.

| | |
|--|-------|
| PAPER 1. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 25th of March, 1784, | - 325 |
| 2. Debate at that Meeting, | - 328 |
| 3. Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 10th of February, 1785, | - 356 |
| 4. Debate at that Meeting, | - 358 |
| 5. Debate in Parliament on Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Reform of the Representation, on the 18th of April, 1785, | - 372 |

NUMBER XV.

Containing, in six Papers, an Account of Proceedings of the Committees of Westminster and Surrey, relative to Mr. Pitt's Plan for Reforming the Representation, propoed to Parliament on the 18th of April, 1785; and also an Account of an ineffectual Attempt to unite the Friends of Parliamentary Reformation in support of that Plan, at a Meeting held at the Thatched-House Tavern, on the 24th of May, 1785.

B

PAPER

| | <i>Page.</i> |
|---|--------------|
| <i>PAPER I. Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of Surrey, on the 21st of April, 1785,</i> | 446 |
| 2. Resolutions of the Westminster Committee, on the 25th of April, 1785, | 448 |
| 3. Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill to Dr. John Jebb, | 451 |
| 4. Letter from Dr. John Jebb to the Rev. C. Wyvill, | 453 |
| 5. Resolution at a previous Meeting at the Thatched-House Tavern, on the 7th of May, 1785, | 459 |
| 6. Resolutions at a Meeting at the Thatched-House Tavern, on the 24th of May, 1785, | 460 |

NUMBER XVI.

Containing, in five Papers, the Resolutions agreed to at the Institution of the Society for Constitutional Information, their three Addresses to the Public, and a Summary Explanation of the Principles of Mr. Pitt's intended Bill, for Reforming the Representation of the People in Parliament, with an Advertisement prefixed from the Society for Constitutional Information.

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>PAPER I. Resolutions at the Institution of the Society for Constitutional Information, in April, 1780,</i> | 463 |
| 1. * The First Address to the Public from that Society, | 465 |
| 3. The Second Address to the Public from that Society, | 471 |
| 4. The Third Address to the Public from that Society, | 506 |
| 5. A Summary Explanation of the Principles of Mr. Pitt's intended Bill for Reforming the Representation, with an Advertisement prefixed from that Society, | 517 |
| * The First Address was written by Major Cartwright, the Second by the late Thomas Day, Esq; the Third by the late John Baynes, Esq. | |

NUMBER XVII.

Containing, in five Papers, the Speech and Proposition of the Right Hon. Henry Flood, to the House of Commons,

Hons, on the 4th of March, 1790, for a Reform in the Representation; *Proceedings at two subsequent Meetings at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, the Rules and Orders of the Manchester Constitutional Society, and the Address of the Society for Constitutional Information at Sheffield.*

Page.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|-----|
| PAPER I. Speech and Proposition of the Right Hon. Henry Flood, on the 4th of March, 1790, for a Reform in the Representation, | - | - | - | 537 |
| 2. Resolutions at the General Meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, on the 23d of April, 1790, | | | | 564 |
| 3. Resolutions at a General Meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, on the 19th of May, 1790, | | | | 568 |
| 4. Rules and Orders of the Manchester Constitutional Society, | - | - | - | 570 |
| 5. Address from the Society for Constitutional Information at Sheffield, | - | - | - | 576 |

APPENDIX THE FIRST TO VOLUME THE SECOND.

CONTAINING,

A State of the Representation of the People of England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, under the Protector Oliver Cromwell, - - - - - 580

A State of the Representation of the People of England, Wales, and Scotland, on the Plan of the Association of the County of York, - - - - - 584

A State of the Representation of the People of England, on the Principles of Mr. Pitt, in the year 1785, with an annexed State of Additional Propositions, suggested by the Editor in 1793, - - - - - 587

APPENDIX THE SECOND.

Containing the Debate in Parliament on the 7th of May, 1783, on Mr. Pitt's Motion for a Reform in the Representation of the People, - - - - - 633

NUMBER IX.

Paper I.

*Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of
Association of the County of York, on the 31st
of October, 1782.*

PRESENT,

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman. | |
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. Jackson of Normanby |
| Sir James Norcliffe | Mr. Stovin |
| The Dean of York | Mr. Stansfield |
| Mr. Duncombe | Mr. R. Wilfon |
| Mr. P. Milnes | General Hale |
| Mr. James Milnes | Rev. John Dixon |
| Mr. R. S. Milnes | Mr. Rawfon |
| Sir Charles Turner | Mr. Strickland of Boynton |
| Mr. Shore | Mr. Sykes |
| Mr. Edmunds | Mr. S. Cradock |
| Mr. Tooker | Mr. Randolph Marriott |
| Mr. Walker | Mr. Yorke |
| Rev. John Robinson | Mr. Legard |
| Rev. Richard Shuttleworth | Rev. William Cayley |
| Mr. F. Smyth | Mr. Chaloner |
| Mr. Wolrich | Mr. Morritt |
| Mr. Saltmarsh, jun. | Mr. Ellsley |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Mr. Battle | Mr. Dring |
| Mr. Booth | Mr. Danby |
| Mr. Wilfon of Ayton | Mr. Athorpe |

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Mr. Mathews | Mr. Yarker |
| Mr. James Milnes, jun. | Rev. Luke Yarker |
| Mr. Childers | Mr. H. Thompson |
| Mr. Croft | Mr. Hayes |
| Mr. Withers | Sir George Strickland |
| Rev. Robert Croft | Rev. John Bourne |
| Mr. Folljambe | Mr. Grimston |
| Mr. Micklethwaite | Dr. Spencer |
| Colonel Thornton | Rev. James Wilkinfon |
| Mr. Lascelles | Sir William Milner |
| Mr. Place | Mr. Hill |
| Mr. Dalton | Mr. Athlington |
| Mr. St. Quintin | Mr. Maude |
| Rev. William Comber | Rev. William Dealtry |
| Mr. Anderson | Dr. Swainston |
| Mr. H. Duncombe | |

Resolved, That Joshua Walker, Esq; Joseph Walker, Esq; and Thomas Walker, Esq; all of Masbrough, Mr. Benj. Sayle of Went-Bridge, and the Rev. William Harrifon of Orgrave, be added to this Committee.

Read the Draught of a Report,* to be made by this Committee of its past proceedings, to the next General Meeting^s of the county of York.

A motion being made and seconded, and the question put, that the following words—"by men alike hostile to the liberties of Britain and unscrupulous in their mode of attacking them," be struck out of the Draught of the Report now read,—it passed in the negative.

Resolved, That the Draught of the Report now read be agreed to, by this Committee, and adopted as their Report; and that such Report be presented by the Chairman to the next General Meeting of the County of York.

Resolved,

* For this Report, see Paper II. page 5.

Resolved, That the said Report be printed, and ready to be delivered to this Committee at its next Meeting.

Resolved, That the Sub-Committee be requested to take into their consideration the accounts delivered to this Committee of the state of the Representation of the City of York, and the several boroughs in this county, and to publish such extracts thereof as to them may appear well authenticated and expedient to be laid before the public, and that the Sub-Committee be instructed cautiously to avoid the communication of names, or any other circumstances which may lead to discovery, whence the said information was obtained.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Committee be given to those gentlemen, by whose zeal and assiduity the foregoing information was procured, and that the Chairman be directed to communicate to them this and the preceding Resolution.

Resolved, That the Chairman be requested to communicate the thanks of this Committee to Mr. D. Hartley; for his Plan for preventing bribery at elections, submitted this day to their consideration; and to inform him that they decline, for the present, adopting the measures he has therein suggested, as it is understood that a bill will be brought in the next Session of Parliament for restraining the evils of bribery and corruption.

Unanimously resolved, That the following

Advertisement be printed in the York and London papers, with the names of the Members of the Committee now present affixed thereto.

To the Freeholders of the County of York.

WHEREAS at a General Meeting of the County of York, held, by adjournment, at York on the 28th day of March, 1780, for the purpose of adopting a Plan of Association, it was resolved that the said Meeting should be further adjourned subject to a call by the Committee of Association.

They, whose names are hereunto prefixed, being Members of the said Committee assembled in York this day, do by virtue of the aforesaid power vested in them, most earnestly request the Freeholders of the said county to meet at the Assembly-Rooms, in York, on the 19th day of December next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, in order to receive an abridged Report of the whole proceedings of the said Committee, since their original appointment; and also to take into their mature consideration the necessity of presenting a Petition to Parliament during the course of the next Sessions, for a redress of that fundamental grievance, *the unequal Representation* of the People, and other important matters respecting the Reformation of Parliament.

Resolved, That this Committee do adjourn till tomorrow morning at nine o'clock.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper II.

A Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association, appointed at the adjourned General Meeting of the County of York, held on the 28th day of March, 1780, presented to the General Meeting of the County of York, held on the 19th day of December, 1782.

THE adjourned General Meeting of the County of York, held on the 28th day of March, 1780, having entered into an Association, in order to promote, by their joint assistance, in a pacific way, the obtaining of,

1. One or more bills to correct profusion in the expenditure of public money, to regulate the manner of making public contracts, and the mode of keeping and passing public accounts; to reduce exorbitant emoluments of office, and to reform the abuses of sinecure places and pensions, unmerited by public service :

2. A bill to establish greater equality in the Representation of the People in Parliament, by allowing the several counties of the kingdom of Great-Britain to elect, in due proportion, one hundred Knights at least, in addition to the present number :

3. A bill to shorten the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years :

And having empowered the Committee of sixty-one gentlemen, appointed at a former Meeting of the County, together with Sir William St. Quintin, Sir W. Anderson, Mr. T. Weddell, Dr. Swainston, or any twenty-one of them, to act as a Committee of Association, to add to their number, and to take such legal and constitutional measures, as to them might appear most expedient, for promoting the object of their Association.

The Committee of Association, in pursuance of that appointment, held their first Meeting on the 29th of March, 1780, added several Members to the Committee, and appointed a standing Sub-Committee for the purpose of correspondence, by letter, during the adjournments of the Committee.

On the 15th of April, 1780, the Committee called together by the Sub-Committee, under the authority granted to them by a Resolution of the Committee, on the 29th of March, voted thanks to John Dunning, Esq; and Thomas Pitt, Esq; for their respective motions in the House of Commons on the 6th of April, 1780, affirming the actual existence of the grievances complained of by the Petitions of the People, and asserting the right and duty of that House to provide immediate and effectual redress.

On

On the 3d of May, 1780, the Committee met according to their adjournment on the 29th of March, and passed Resolutions, thanking those Members of both Houses of Parliament, who had uniformly opposed the coercion of America to unconditional submission; also those Members of the House of Commons, who supported the bill for preventing certain officers of the revenue from voting at any future election of Members of Parliament; and also the forty-one Lords who supported the Contractors' bill; at the same time censuring his Majesty's Ministers, who, by the rejection of that bill in the House of Lords, had manifested their determination to preserve entire that unconstitutional influence of the Crown, which the House of Commons had declared ought to be diminished; and also voting that Minister to be an enemy to the liberties of his country, who should advise his Majesty to prorogue or dissolve the Parliament, until the House of Commons should have fulfilled their promise to the people, to correct the abuses complained of in their Petitions.

On the 2d of August, 1780, the Committee met by a call of the Sub-Committee, at a period when the nation, dismayed by the abominable riots of the populace in London, appeared sinking into despondence, and disposed tamely to submit to the unprecedented order to the military force to interfere, for the suppression of tumults, *at their discretion, without the direction of*

the Civil Magistrate; and when the enemies of the Constitution had laboured, with too great success, to obstruct the efforts of the counties, &c. for obtaining a redress of public grievances, by defaming their pacific Associations, as Meetings calculated to produce similar acts of violence. On this critical and unfortunate emergency, the Committee having repulsed those defamatory attacks, and vindicated the legal views of their Association, proceeded to censure the order for disarming peaceable Protestant subjects, as contrary to the known law of the land; and the order for the interference of the army throughout the kingdom, for suppressing illegal Assemblies of the people at their sole discretion, when no pressing danger actually existed, and when no reluctance appeared in the magistracy to do their duty, as a dangerous precedent, not to be justified on any real ground of necessity; and the Committee having exhorted their fellow-citizens to persevere in an orderly support of their legal Associations, recommended to all substantial Householders to be ready, on the first appearance of any riotous commotion, to assist in maintaining peace and good order, under the directions of the Civil Magistrate.

On the 3d of August, 1780, the Committee requested Mr. Burke to present again, in the next Session of Parliament, his bill for the better regulation of his Majesty's civil establishment.

On

On the 7th of September, 1780, the Committee was called together by the Sub-Committee, on the occasion of the premature dissolution of Parliament; and the Sheriff of Yorkshire having been desired by the Sub-Committee to call a Meeting of the Freeholders of this County, in order that proper persons might be put in nomination to represent them in the ensuing Parliament, and he having declared his disapprobation of that measure, the Committee, in pursuance of the authority intrusted to them by a Resolution of the County Meeting, held on the 28th of March, 1780, did resolve to call a Meeting of the Freeholders of Yorkshire on the 14th of September, 1780, for the purpose aforesaid; and returned thanks to Sir George Savile for his manly Address to his Constituents on the 5th of September, and for his faithful service in Parliament.

On the 28th of September, 1780, the Committee resolved to nominate Deputies on the 3d of January, 1781, to attend the proposed General Meeting of Deputies in London.

On the 3d of January, 1781, the Committee appointed the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, Samuel Shore, Esq; and Sir James Norcliffe, their Deputies, with power to meet and confer with the Deputies from other counties, &c. and to concur with them in an application to Parliament, for correcting the gross abuses in the public expenditure, and for reducing the undue influence of the

the Crown, complained of by the Petition of this County to the last Parliament; and also to move the Meeting of Deputies aforesaid, to endeavour to obtain a more adequate Representation of the People, by the introduction of at least one hundred additional County Members: But the Committee left it to the discretion of their Deputies to determine, as circumstances might arise in the course of their conference, whether a motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments to a term not exceeding three years, would then be prudent and adviseable, or premature, inconvenient, and fit to be postponed to a future Session of Parliament; most strictly confining them to support those propositions of the Association by orderly means alone, by dutiful application to Parliament, or by such other prudential measures as might be perfectly consistent with Law and the Constitution: And the Committee, anxious to obviate every artful suggestion which might be employed to calumniate their design in the said appointment of Deputies, not only submitted to general inspection their instructions to their Deputies, but also stated, in a full and explicit address to the Electors of Great-Britain, their views of public reformation; and the reasons of their conduct for promoting that necessary work; and exhorting the counties, &c. who concurred in those political sentiments, to co-operate with the Committee in the proposed General Deputation, they expressed

expressed their confidence; that, in the general wreck which threatened the fortunes of the public, their vigorous and timely interposition might yet preserve the Liberty and Constitution of Britain.

On the 4th of January, 1781, the Committee thanked the armed Association of the City of York, for their resolute and well-timed exertions in support of the laws of their country, during the unprovoked riots which immediately followed the last election for the county; requested David Hartley, Esq; to permit the publication of his excellent Address to them, dated January the 3d, 1781; and resolved to transmit it, with their recommendation, to the other Committees throughout the kingdom.

On the 9th of May, 1781, the Deputies reported to the Committee, the result of their conference with the Deputies of other Associated Bodies, viz. That a Petition was presented from the General Deputation to the House of Commons, on behalf of themselves and others their fellow-subjects, who, jointly with them in the last Session of the late Parliament, had petitioned that Honourable House, that some remedy might be provided against the unconstitutional influence of the Crown, and some stop might be put to the lavish expenditure of the public money; entreating, both for the relief of the subject and the safety of the Constitution, that Honourable House would proceed to inquire
by

by what means these alarming grievances might be redressed: That the concurrence of the General Meeting, in the propositions for a reform of Parliament, adopted by the County of York, was obtained; but neither the Nobles nor the House of Representatives, having at that time appeared sufficiently favourable to this Plan of Reform, nor the people themselves having supported the General Deputation with sufficient vigour, it was found necessary to postpone that arduous task to a more favourable, but, they trusted, not a very distant season.—The Committee having approved the conduct of their Deputies, voted thanks to Sir George Savile, Mr. Dunning, and Mr. H. Duncombe, for their ready attention and support to the Petition of the General Deputation, and exhorted their fellow-subjects to persevere, without remission, in pursuit of the objects of the Association.

On the 10th of May, 1781, the Committee thanked Sir George Savile, in terms of peculiar approbation, for having attended Parliament, notwithstanding a very precarious state of health, to oppose the late scandalously extravagant loan.

On the 17th of October, 1781, certain information having been received by the Committee, that the Clergy of this Association had been censured by High Authority, and their efforts in support of the Constitution of this country, treated as foreign to the function of a Clergyman, and not the road to preferment; the Lay
Members

Members of the Committee, after asserting this undeniable truth, That a Protestant, by entering into Holy Orders, does not abandon his Civil Rights, voted thanks to those Reverend Gentlemen who thus preferred the public good to their own private emolument.—And the Committee considering, with deep regret, that their conduct, although strictly conformable to law, and uniformly directed to the support of measures which alone can RESTORE THE CONSTITUTION, was still grossly misrepresented by men alike hostile to the liberties of Britain, and unscrupulous in their mode of attacking them, resolved once more to refute those malicious cavils in a free Address to their countrymen, pointing out the progress of Corruption, lamenting the decline of the Constitution, and fully vindicating the proposed means for its RESTORATION. In their apprehension, to rectify a disordered Legislature, must indeed be a work of the greatest toil and difficulty; but there is yet, in the independent part of the community, a fund of vigour adequate to the task, and the ancient spirit of the Constitution still affords unexhausted resources for a lawful, orderly, and effectual interposition; far, therefore, from wishing to promote confusion, or to prompt their fellow-citizens to deeds of violence and desperation, they exhorted them, with conscientious sincerity, to confine their efforts within the bounds of legality; but within those bounds resolutely to oppose

oppose that system of Parliamentary Corruption, which is alike the bane of national morality, and the ruin of public liberty.

On the 4th of April, 1782, the Committee thanked the independent majority of the Commons House of Parliament, who, on the 27th of February last, reprobated the farther prosecution of offensive war on the Continent of North America, for the purpose of reducing the revolted Colonies to obedience by force; expressed the fullest confidence in those avowed opponents of corruption, with whom, on the consequent dismissal of the late profuse and dangerous Administration, the powers of Government had been entrusted; but conceiving the task of Government, in that moment, to be arduous beyond the difficulty experienced in any former period, they resolved to postpone to the 31st of October, 1782, calling a General Meeting of the County of York, in order to submit to their Constituents the necessity of presenting a Petition to Parliament in the next Session, for a redress of that fundamental grievance, the unequal Representation of the People in Parliament.

On the 31st of October, 1782, the Committee resolved to request the Freeholders of the County of York, to meet for the consideration of that important measure, on the 19th of December, 1782.

In this abridged narrative every material step taken by the Committee of Association, in pursuance

fuance of the trust committed to them by the County of York, has been related; and they are happy to lay this brief, but full account of their transactions before the County on this occasion; when, they trust, they shall not be thought to have postponed too long the surrender of their delegated powers, or to have been disinclined to submit their conduct to the judgment of their Constituents; faults which would merit peculiar blame in men who so severely reprobate the septennial duration of Parliament. For more than two years they have laboured in the prosecution of that political reform which was pointed out by the County as the object of their commission. On every proper opportunity it has been their zealous endeavour to promote the wishes of their Constituents, by expressing their gratitude to those distinguished Senators by whom the Public Cause was promoted, by passing votes of censure on those men by whom it was obstructed; by recommending to the nation, in repeated addresses, to support the demand of reformation; stating the profusion of the public expenditure, the propriety of an æconomical retrenchment, and the urgent necessity of an effectual correction of abuses in the frame and duration of Parliament, and also by appointing Deputies, instructed in concurrence with the General Deputation, to Petition the House of Commons for a redress of those great national grievances.

Such

Such was the purpose for which this County first assembled, and resolved to associate; and such have been the efforts of this Committee for the attainment of that end. If the end itself be laudable, the means surely must be deemed unexceptionable. In times of danger to the Constitution, popular combinations are the proper and the only effectual means to defend it: And although men, who profess much concern for order and regularity, while they discover little regard for the rights and privileges of the nation, may dislike all Assemblies of the People, yet the Committee trust that, in their exertions, the strictest examination by men most averse to popular Meetings, will not be able to point out the smallest breach of any duty prescribed by the laws of their country: They shall be little apprehensive of censure on other ground, if their conduct shall merit the approbation of this Assembly, as having been faithfully directed to Public Good, according to the intention of their original appointment.

The Committee cannot close this Report, consistently with their duty to this county and to the public, without declaring their sentiments remain unaltered, that a melioration of Parliament, on the principles of the Association, must be obtained, or the liberty of Britain cannot long be preserved; for although something has been laudably done for the purposes of economical retrenchment, and lessening the excessive influence

influence of the Crown, yet the best official regulations may soon be set aside, the wisest and most virtuous Ministers may soon be displaced by the prevalence of that corrupt interest which still subsists in the House of Commons, which its defective frame naturally generates, and which has already so nearly effected the ruin of this unhappy country.

Paper III.

*Resolutions at the adjourned Meeting of the
Committee of Association of the County of
York, on the 1st of November, 1782.*

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| Mr. H. Duncombe | Mr. Marriott |
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. Cradock |
| Mr. Croft | Sir R. D. Hildyard |
| Mr. Danby | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. Shore | Mr. Tooker |
| Mr. F. Smyth | Rev. Richard Shuttleworth |
| Mr. Yorke | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Mr. Athorpe | Rev. Robert Croft |
| Mr. Sykes | Sir Charles Turner |
| Mr. Battle | Mr. Morritt |
| Dr. Speoper | Rev. William Comber |
| Mr. Saltmarsh, jun. | Sir James Norcliffe |
| Mr. R. Wilson | Rev. John Dixon |
| Rev. James Wilkinson | Mr. Grimston |
| Rev. John Bourne | Mr. Dalton |
| Mr. Hill | Mr. Courtney |
| General Hale | The Dean of York |
| Mr. Dring | Rev. William Cayley |

VOL. II

B

Resolved,

Resolved, That the following letter be sent by the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, in the name of this Committee, to the Chairmen of the several Committees throughout the kingdom, and to such other friends to the Reformation of Parliament as he may think fit.

BURTON-HALL, near *Bedale*, Nov. 1, 1782.

Sir,

I AM directed by the Committee of Association for the County of York, to transmit to you the inclosed account of their proceedings on this day, and the 31st of October, which they request you will have the goodness to lay before the Committee of ———, at its next Meeting.

I am also instructed to mention how much the Yorkshire Committee wish to obtain a free communication of sentiments with the Committee of ———, on the subject of Parliamentary abuses, hoping, by their opinion and advice, to be enabled to judge what propositions, for the Reformation of Parliament, it may be expedient to recommend to the intended General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th day of December next.

The Yorkshire Committee have seen, with much satisfaction, Petitions adopted by several Public Meetings of great respectability, requesting, in *general terms*, a redress of Parliamentary grievances; they approve this respect and deference

ference to Parliament, and with a similar delicacy may be observed in the measures of the county of York: But it seems to be advisable that this *General Petition* of the people should be supported by some *particular declaration* of their wishes, in a mode as little offensive as possible to the dignity of Parliament; for if it shall not be known on what grounds, and to what extent the people desire that the Reformation of Parliament may proceed, it may be foreseen that hence insuperable objections will be urged against every Plan of Reformation which their friends in Parliament may propose. INSTRUCTIONS from each Constituent Body to their respective Representatives seem to be the most obvious and unexceptionable mode, by which Parliament may be apprised what correction of abuses is expected by the people, and yet every appearance of disrespect to that Assembly may be entirely avoided.

If this method of conveying the sense of the nation to Parliament, and ascertaining *what Reformation there* would give general satisfaction, should be approved, the next important consideration would be, what particular propositions of reform, in the present state of this country, are most eligible; and, if proposed in the INSTRUCTIONS of any Constituent Body, are most likely to receive the general concurrence of the public: For if too extensive a system of Reformation should be rashly obtruded on Parliament, the whole attempt might

miscarry, and the opportunity to secure the liberties of Britain for generations to come, might be irretrievably lost. But on the other hand, every friend to the Constitution would lament the loss of superior improvement, if, from too rigid a scruple to extend the terms of the Association, the additional Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis should be alone procured, when the abolition of the **MOST OBJECTIONABLE BOROUGHES**, in a limited degree, might have been obtained. In the opinion of the Yorkshire Committee, the little decayed boroughs, dependent on, or unduly influenced by, the Boards of Ordnance, Treasury, Admiralty, &c. may be justly placed in that class. For what more dangerous perversion of the Constitution can be imagined, than **THE NOMINATION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT BY THE CROWN**; or what fidelity to the Public Trust can be expected from Senators who are thus created by that Government, whose conduct they ought to watch and controul?

On this occasion, the Yorkshire Gentlemen are free to own their inclination, if the proposal should fortunately meet the approbation of the Committee of ———, and other respectable bodies, to recommend to the General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th of December:

1. To instruct their Representatives to introduce, or to support a bill in Parliament, for abolishing at least fifty of the most **MOST OB-
NOXIOUS**

NOXIOUS BOROUGHES; providing for the Electors in the several boroughs abolished a proper gratuitous compensation for their extinguished franchises; and enabling them to vote, together with the Freeholders, in elections for Knights of the respective Shires to which they belong; and also adding an adequate number of Members, not less than an hundred, in a due proportion to the several counties and the metropolis:

2. And farther to instruct their Representatives to move, or to support a motion for the repeal of the Septennial bill:

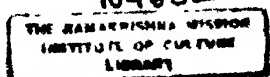
3. Also for admitting proprietors of copyhold lands of inheritance, with fine certain, of the clear yearly value of forty shillings, to vote at County Elections of Members of Parliament throughout the kingdom:

4. And lastly, To support the application of any county in Scotland, for setting aside nominal and fictitious votes, and for regulating elections to Parliament in that part of the kingdom, in a manner agreeable to the true intent and spirit of the Constitution.

On the subject of the two last articles of Reform, the Yorkshire Committee are little apprehensive that any considerable variation of sentiment will be found among the true friends of the Constitution—still less can they suppose that, to the proposition for the repeal of the Septennial bill, any material objection will be urged:

But

B 3
104632—



But if the proposal for a limited disfranchisement of the most obnoxious boroughs should not receive the approbation and concurrence of a decided majority of the counties and principal towns, which support the claim of Parliamentary Reformation, the Yorkshire Committee will not hesitate a moment to sacrifice their wishes to the preservation of that harmony and union among the several Associated and Petitioning Bodies, without which there cannot be a probability of success. In that case they will readily strike out the article for the abolition of certain boroughs, and recommend to the General Meeting of the County of York to adhere in their instructions to the second proposition in their Form of Association, for reinforcing the sound part of our Representation, by the addition of one hundred Members, to be proportionally chosen by the counties and the metropolis.

The Yorkshire Committee having so freely suggested their sentiments on these important matters, do most earnestly intreat the Committee of ———, with equal freedom, to communicate their opinion and advice, which will be received with the greatest deference and respect.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Resolved,

Resolved, That this Committee do adjourn to Tuesday, the 17th day of December next, subject to an earlier call by the Sub-Committee, or by the Chairman, at the request of any five Members.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper IV.

Letter from BRASS CROSBY, Esq; Chairman of the Committee of Association of the Livery of London, to the Rev. C. WYVILL.

GUILDHALL, London, Nov. 27, 1782.

Sir,

THE Committee of Association of the Livery of London acceded, with much pleasure, to the sentiments and advice of the Chairman of the Committee of Association for the County of York, with which they were made acquainted at the Thatched House Tavern, at a General Meeting of all the Members of Committees of the Associating Counties and Boroughs then present in London, previous to the prorogation last summer. With great satisfaction they have found, that the County of Middlesex, the City

of Westminster, and other places, have also conformed strictly to the resolution then unanimously taken, viz. "To avoid any specific propositions relative to the Parliamentary reform."

The wisdom of such general application, as well as the great respect which this Committee entertains for the Gentlemen of the Yorkshire Committee, and the earnest desire of union and harmony, forbid them in any manner to mention or bring forward any particular plan of proposition.

This Committee hope for a mature and well-digested Reform of Parliament, which they trust will proceed from the investigation of a Committee of the House of Commons.—And they beg leave to propose to the Committee of York the propriety of suspending, or postponing, instructions to their Representatives, until the fate of the General Petitions is decided.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient and

Most humble servant,

BRASS CROSBY, Chairman.

Rev. Mr. WYVILL, Chairman of
the Yorkshire Committee.

Paper V.

*Answer by the Rev. C. WYVILL, to BRASS
CROSBY, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 7, 1782.

Sir,

I AM happy that my political conduct at any time has been honoured with the approbation of the Committee of the Livery of London. But I cannot flatter myself that the part I took in the transactions at the Thatched House in May last, deserved any peculiar commendation; or that opinions delivered there by so humble an individual, possessed that weight and influence which the Committee are pleased to ascribe to them. On the other hand, I trust I shall be able to satisfy the Committee, that their disapprobation of my conduct in a recent instance, which I observe, with much concern, conveyed in the same letter which has bestowed upon me such unmerited praise, is founded on a mistaken view of my sentiments and actions.

I do admit, Sir, that at the Thatched House I did object, with some respectable gentlemen of other counties, to a vote of thanks to the Duke of Richmond, in all the various shapes in which it was offered to the Meeting. To me, who hold his Grace in high respect, as a firm and intrepid Assertor

Assertor of our Free Constitution, this was a painful opposition. But, in my conception, public duty bound me to oppose the respective motions for that purpose; not because his Grace was the proposer of a specific Plan for the Reformation of Parliament, but because his specific Plan appeared to me impracticable, and not to be attained by any regular or constitutional efforts of the people;—and therefore any resolution of thanks, which might be construed by the public as a declaration in favour of his Grace's system, could only tend to defeat that more safe and moderate proposal for restoring the Constitution, which their peaceful endeavours might probably obtain. In this opposition the worthy Members of the Corporation of London, then present, generally concurred; by their influence the several motions were withdrawn—and, consequently, it became unnecessary to urge any farther objections against the Plan itself, considered with respect to its utility in the present circumstances of this country. I do admit, also, that although no formal resolution was passed upon the subject, yet it was agreed at the Thatched House, and I concurred in the agreement, that it was expedient the intended Petition for the Redress of our Parliamentary Grievances should be drawn up *in general terms*. But I certainly did not bind myself “to avoid any specific propositions relative to the Parliamentary Reform,” in any other mode of declaration, when-
ever

ever a proper degree of union upon the subject could be accomplished. And I do not find the other Yorkshire Gentlemen, who had been present at the Thatched House, understood this agreement in a different manner. At the late Meeting of the Yorkshire Committee, several of those Gentlemen attended; and to their recollection the objection did not occur, when the Circular Letter was proposed.

In my opinion, the want of unanimity among the agents of the people, in favour of any specific Plan, is the unfortunate circumstance which threatens most their total disappointment.—For if no means can be devised to unite the body of the people, in support of some rational and substantial improvement of the Constitution, their continued dissensions, no doubt, will furnish to the timid or interested Obstructors of Reformation a ready answer to their Petitions: “Why should Parliament admit a Change till it is known what Change will satisfy the Nation? When the people themselves are agreed what Redress they ought to ask, then, and not before, let Parliament deliberate what Redress they ought to grant.” It is obvious, indeed, that till that General Union of the People shall take place, discordant Petitions, recommending to Parliament different specific Plans of Reformation, would but expose the people to the derision of their adversaries. But it behoves their agents to consider, that no time should be lost, no endeavours should be unemployed,

ployed, to conciliate and to unite the various Friends of Reformation, before the season for that work be irrecoverably past. At length the whirl of casual events has brought on the favourable opportunity ; but if they omit to improve the fleeting advantage, a few short months may frustrate every future attempt to retrieve their neglect.

“ The Committee of London hope for a mature and well-digested Reform of Parliament, which they trust will proceed from the investigation of a Committee of the House of Commons.” I freely own my hopes are placed upon a different foundation, viz. on the firmness and energy of the British People, pointing out the principle of that Reformation which they request—specifying the extent to which they desire it may proceed—and leaving the minute detail of Reformation to be settled by Parliament itself : But if the late overture of the Yorkshire Committee, and every other attempt to accomplish a more General Union of the People, for the prosecution of some specific Plan of Reformation of equal extent, should prove unsuccessful, it may be expected that any Correction of Parliamentary Abuses, which may flow from the spontaneous act and pleasure of Parliament, will be much inferior to that Plan of Constitutional Improvement, which the Yorkshire Gentlemen have proposed. In my apprehension, any change that may be made will also originate with less propriety,

propriety, and, in point of precedent, with less safety from Parliament than from the special applications of the people, by instructions to their respective Members. Such were my sentiments before the Meeting of the Thatched House; and they remain unaltered since, by conversation or correspondence.

The general phrase is, that "Something must be done." What probably will be done, may perhaps in some measure be collected from that Message which I had the honour to receive from Lord Shelburne in August last; the purport of which was soon after communicated to the Committee of London. His Lordship undoubtedly stands pledged to support the Propositions of the Yorkshire Association; *i. e.* To promote the addition of one hundred Members to the Counties and the Metropolis, and the repeal of the Septennial bill. But if Petitions, in general terms alone, shall be presented to Parliament, and no instructions shall be offered to our several Representatives, for the amputation of rotten Borough, I see no reason to suppose that any abolition of their obnoxious franchises will take place, against the manifest interest of many powerful Members of Parliament, except by the slow operation of a Parliamentary Tribunal in some rare instance disfranchising an unfortunate Borough, on proof of corruption too flagrant to be dissembled. I am far from meaning to disparage the measure for reinforcing the sound
part

part of our Representation : If nothing better can be obtained, I shall be thankful even for that additional security to our freedom. But I am convinced that an adequate abolition of the little decayed boroughs would strongly corroborate that security ; and I conceive that both might yet be accomplished, by a timely and vigorous exertion of the people for those special purposes. 104632

With these impressions on my mind I attended the late Meeting of the Yorkshire Committee ; and having produced to that Assembly a copy of the message from Lord Shelburne, and stated to them my subsequent correspondence on that subject with his Lordship, which appeared at once to confirm the message, and to be improper for public inspection *at that time*, my production of the correspondence in question was not required by the Committee. But it was not my advice to the Committee to acquiesce in these declarations of support from Lord Shelburne.— At the Thatched House Meeting I had opposed thanking the Duke of Richmond for his impracticable Plan ; at the Yorkshire Meeting I exhorted the Committee not to content themselves with the mere augmentation of County Members, &c. which the Cabinet seemed disposed to promote ; but, as far as it is possible, without risking that acquisition, to attempt the still superior improvement of an adequate amputation of the little decayed boroughs. What I ventured

ventured to suggest on this occasion was honoured with the approbation of that respectable Assembly, and was carried into effect in the Circular Letter, which the Committee of London has already seen.

From this explanation of my political conduct and sentiments for some time past, I trust I shall be justified in the opinion of that Committee, as having acted, in circumstances of some difficulty, an honest and a consistent part. But this is a matter comparatively of small moment. I am confident from this state of some late transactions, whatever the final determination of that Committee may be on the subject of the Circular Letter, they will approve the caution, the perseverance, the well-tempered zeal of the Yorkshire Committee.

With respect to the propriety of "Postponing instructions to their Representatives, until the fate of the General Petitions is decided," which your respected Committee proposes to that of Yorkshire, I would beg leave to suggest one short observation, which is, That when the fate of the Petitions shall be decided, any instructions upon the subject will probably come too late.—If, in consequence of an application *in general terms* to Parliament, the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis shall be reinforced by the addition of fifty or sixty Members, any future application to the Legislature for farther improvement, in this age at least, cannot, with
any

any probability, be expected to receive the countenance and support of the nation.—If, therefore, the Committee of London have no objection to the Propositions offered by the Yorkshire Gentlemen, their concurrence *now* can alone be of any avail. If they decline giving their sanction to that proposal, from a preference to the Duke of Richmond's scheme, I beg leave to declare my firm opinion, as I did before at the Thatched House Meeting, that there exists not the smallest probability that his Grace's Plan will be adopted by the Towns and Counties of Great-Britain, in any considerable proportion.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

BRASS CROSBY, Esq;
Chairman, &c.

Paper VI.

Paper VI.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 17th of December, 1782.

PRESENT,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| The Dean of York | Mr. Shore |
| Sir James Norcliffe | Mr. Ward |
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. Edmunds |
| Mr. H. Duncombe | Mr. Withers |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard | General Hale |
| Mr. Yorke | Mr. Yarker |
| Rev. John Dixon | Mr. Hayes |
| Mr. Foord | Mr. Grimston |
| Mr. Pool | Rev. John Bourne |
| Mr. Croft | Mr. Wolrich |
| Rev. Robert Croft | Mr. Lodge |
| Mr. Croft, jun. | Mr. Micklethwaite |
| Mr. Sykes | Sir George Strickland |
| Mr. Legard | Rev. William Comber |
| Sir Watts Horton | Mr. Strickland |
| Mr. Courtney | Mr. Tooker |
| Rev. John Robinson | Sir William Milner |
| Mr. Waines | Mr. Hill |
| Mr. F. Smyth | Mr. Dring |
| Rev. William Dade | Mr. Rawson |
| Mr. Walker | Mr. Booth |
| Rev. William Dealtry | Mr. Chaloner |
| Mr. Barlow | Mr. Joseph Walker |

Read Letters from the Chairmen of the Committees of Nottinghamshire, Westminster, Southwark, Norfolk, Somersetshire, Gloucestershire,
 VOL. II. C London,

London, Middlesex, Flintshire, and Carnarvonshire; the Mayors or Town Clerks of Biddeford, Liverpool, York, Doncaster, Pool, Petersfield, Hereford, Gloucester, and Bridport; the Constables of Manchester; and the Sheriffs or Deputy Sheriffs of the Shires of Moray, Stirling, Haddington, Lanark, and Fife, received by the Chairman of this Committee, in answer to his Circular Letter of the 1st of November last, sent in pursuance of the order of this Committee made that day.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned till to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper VII.

Paper VII.

*Resolutions at the adjourned Meeting of the
Committee of Association of the County of
York, on the 18th of December, 1782.*

PRESENT,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Mr. Courtney | Mr. H. Duncombe |
| General Hale | Mr. Tooker |
| Mr. Waines | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. Chaloner | Mr. Dring |
| Mr. R. Wilton | Mr. F. Smyth |
| Mr. Yorke | Mr. Shore |
| Rev. Robert Croft | Mr. Stovin |
| Mr. Sykes | Dr. Swainston |
| Mr. Croft | Rev. John Dixon |
| Mr. Strickland | Mr. Rawson |
| Rev. John Robinson | Sir James Norcliffe |
| Mr. Marriott | Mr. Pool |
| Mr. Milnes | Mr. Legard |
| Mr. R. S. Milnes | The Dean of York |
| Mr. Warde | Mr. Hayes |
| Mr. Athorpe | Rev. William Dealtry |
| Mr. Mathews | Mr. Wolrich |
| Mr. Parker | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Sir Charles Turner | Rev. William Dade |
| Rev. Richard Shuttleworth | Rev. William Comber |
| Sir Watts Horton | Rev. Luke Yarker |
| Mr. Edmunds | Mr. Yarker |
| Mr. Foord | Sir William Milner |
| Mr. Battle | Mr. Morritt |
| Mr. Booth | Mr. H. Thompson |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Joseph Walker | Mr. Dawson |
| Mr. Sykes | Mr. Lodge |
| Sir George Strickland | Mr. Micklethwaite |
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. Anderson |
| Mr. Barlow | Mr. Grimston |
| Rev. John Bourne | |

Read Letters from the Chairmen of the Suffex Committee, the Secretary to the Huntingdonshire Committee, the Mayors or Town Clerks of Bedford, Tenby, Leiceſter, and Nottingham, the Provost of Glaſgow, and the Sheriff of the Shire of Argyle, in answer to the Chairman's Circular Letter of the 1ſt of November laſt.

Resolved unanimously, That this Committee is thoroughly perſuaded of the propriety and conſiſtency of the Rev. Mr. Wyvill's conduct, upon all occaſions, as Chairman of this Committee.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, for his unremitting attention and indefatigable zeal in conducting the buſineſs of this Committee.

Read and approved the following Draught of a Petition,

To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament aſſembled.

* The Humble Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York,

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners, ſenſible of the excellency of that Conſtitution under which they have the happineſs to live, moſt ardently wiſh
to

* This Petition is an exact copy of the Petition adopted by the County of Kent, on the 8th of June, 1782.

to have it maintained on the principles on which it is founded.

Your Petitioners further shew, That it is necessary to the welfare of the people, that the Commons House of Parliament should have a common interest with the nation; and that in the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, the House of Commons do not sufficiently speak the voice of the People.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Honourable House to take into their most serious consideration, the present inadequate state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, and to apply such remedy to this great Constitutional evil, as to this Honourable House may seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Resolved, That the Chairman be requested to get the Draught of the Petition, now read, ingrossed, in order to be presented for the consideration of the Freeholders who may attend the previous Meeting at the York-Tavern, at eight o'clock in the evening.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned *fine die*.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper VIII.

Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County of York, held at York on the 19th of December, 1782, upon a Call by the Committee of Association for that County, pursuant to the Power intrusted to them by the Meeting of the County of York, held on the 28th day of March, 1780.

THE Report of the past proceedings of the Committee of Association was presented by the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, their Chairman :

And a motion being made, and the question put, that such Report be now read,

It passed in the affirmative; and the same was read accordingly.

A motion being made and seconded, and the question put, that the following Petition to Parliament be read, it passed in the affirmative; and the same was read accordingly.*

A

* The Petition being nearly the same which was approved by the Committee on the 18th of December, and which has been already inserted at page 36, is therefore omitted here. The only amendment made in it, was the insertion of the word "original" in the first clause. The clause, thus amended, runs in this manner, "That your Petitioners sensible of the original excellency of the Constitution."

A motion then being made and seconded, and the question put,

Resolved unanimously, That this Petition be adopted, and do pass as the Act of this Meeting.

The several motions following were afterwards successively made and seconded, and the question being put upon each, it was

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting having adopted a Petition, requesting a Reformation of Parliament *in general terms*, and being apprehensive that, from the generality of the Petition, the intention of this Meeting may be misconstrued, as aiming at a Reformation of Parliament on principles, and to an extent which they do not mean to recommend, do find it necessary to declare that,

1. If a bill shall be passed in Parliament for abolishing at least fifty of the most obnoxious boroughs; providing for the Electors in the several boroughs abolished a proper gratuitous compensation for their extinguished franchises; and enabling them to vote, together with the Freeholders, in elections for Knights of the respective Shires to which they belong; and also adding an adequate number of Members, not less than an hundred, in a due proportion to the several counties and the metropolis:

2. And if the Septennial bill shall be repealed:

3. And if a bill shall be passed for admitting proprietors of copyhold lands of inheritance,

with fine certain, of the clear yearly value of forty shillings, to vote at County Elections of Members of Parliament throughout the kingdom:

4. And lastly, if a bill shall be passed for setting aside nominal and fictitious votes in Scotland, and for regulating elections to Parliament in that part of the kingdom, in a manner agreeable to the true intent and spirit of the Constitution :

The correction of Parliamentary abuses, effected by those measures, will establish a reformation of Parliament which this County would *highly approve.*

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting, trusting in the experienced zeal of their Representatives, Sir George Savile, Bart.ⁿ and Henry Duncombe, Esq; as far as circumstances will allow, to promote the reasonable wishes of their Constituents to accomplish a substantial Reformation of Parliament as aforesaid, and to support farther measures of strict frugality, so indispensably necessary in the present condition of this country, doth postpone offering to their worthy Representatives any instructions on the said matters.

Resolved unanimously, That the Chairman be directed to communicate the preceding Resolutions to Sir George Savile and Mr. Henry Duncombe; and at the same time, in strong terms, to express to them this Meeting's grateful sense of their faithful and disinterested services

vices in Parliament; and also to acquaint Sir George Savile with what regret the intimation of his absence from this Meeting, occasioned by severe indisposition, was received by his Constituents, and with what sincerity they wish the re-establishment of his health.

Resolved unanimously, That the Committee of Association be re-appointed with its former powers.

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting is fully sensible of the benefits which will accrue to the nation from the salutary and economical Bills of Reform, which were passed in the last Session of Parliament; which Reform, it trusts, will be persevered in, until the grievances complained of in the former Petition of this County are completely redressed.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the following Members of Parliament, who have honoured this Meeting with their presence, viz.—The Earl of Surrey, Lord Viscount Gallway, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Sir Charles Turner, Mr. Stanhope, and Mr. Henry Peirse; and that this Meeting doth esteem the conduct of Lord Viscount Gallway, Mr. Henry Peirse, and Mr. Frankland, in appearing at it this day, in support of a Petition which affects their private property, as the most distinguished proof of their disinterestedness and public spirit.

Resolved unanimously, That the Earl of Surrey, Lord Viscount Gallway, Henry Peirse, Esq;

Esq; and Thomas Frankland, Esq; be added to the Committee of Association for this County.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, the worthy Chairman of the Committee of Association, for his indefatigable zeal and great abilities, employed in the service of this county, and of the public.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his upright and impartial conduct.

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting be adjourned, subject to a call by the Committee of Association.

W. CHALONER, Chairman.

Paper IX.

Account of the Debate, &c. at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th of December, 1782.

MR. CHALONER being called to the Chair, opened the business by reading the public advertisement.

Mr. WYVILL then rose, and moved that the Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association be read ; which being done by the Chairman, Mr. Wyvill addressed the Meeting to the following purport :

Mr. CHAIRMAN,

It cannot have escaped your observation, that in the narrative which has been read to this respectable audience, the Committee have reported some Resolutions which bear no immediate relation to the objects of their commission. But, they trust, no apology to their Constituents will be thought necessary for acts of self-defence in the Committee, or acts of justice to their injured Associates ; without which the honour and credit of the Association itself could not have been preserved entire.

If,

If, on the first glance, their censure of the discretionary orders to the Military Force should be thought an exceptionable measure, on a little farther reflection the absolute necessity of it will be apparent. For every legal effort to improve the Constitution, while all Law and the Constitution lay at the mercy of an army ordered to act at their discretion, must have been vain and nugatory.

Their thanks to those Senators in each House who opposed the coercion of America to unconditional submission, and afterwards to that virtuous majority of the Commons' House, who voted the discontinuance of offensive war in America, are Resolutions still less liable to just objection. They are conformable to a prior Resolution of this County; and it is manifest, moreover, that all attempts to reduce the exorbitant power of the Crown, or to establish a frugal and incorrupt expenditure of the public money, must have been unsuccessful, till that offensive war, the abundant source of corruption, the never-failing pretence for endless prodigality, could be effectually stopped.

In consequence of that honest vote of Parliament, prohibiting hostilities for the subjugation of America, the dismissal of an hated Administration became unavoidable, and the powers of Government were intrusted to men, in whose wisdom, integrity, and inviolable attachment to the Constitution the nation justly confided. By
those

those zealous opponents of a corrupt system of Government, regulations were instantly established, enforcing public frugality, diminishing the excessive influence of the Crown, and tending in some degree to restore the purity and independence of Parliament. The upright Ministers, whose promise of those beneficial measures has been so faithfully performed, amply merited that universal applause which has been so cordially given them.

But to its own integrity and zeal, to its own vigour and perseverance in the generous struggle for liberty, the public stands principally indebted. And if this Committee, acting in concert with other Deputed Bodies, may be thought to have promoted this salutary Revolution, far from assuming any praise themselves, they are proud to acknowledge the efficacy and success of their exertions must be wholly ascribed to the weight and influence of this great county, by which they have been so nobly supported.

In the common joy on that happy change of Counsels, and on the consequent correction of those abuses which had excited general indignation, the Committee sincerely partake. But while they congratulate this Assembly on the advantages already gained, truth and duty to the public, unmingled with any meaner purpose to disparage those achievements, oblige them to declare their deliberate judgment, that no solid and permanent security for the rights
of

of the nation has yet been obtained. If that beginning of Reformation be not followed up and sustained by some more durable improvement of the Constitution, short will be the exultation of the public, and transient will be the benefits derived from those salutary regulations. For near a century bitter experience has proved, that, constituted as it now is, the House of Commons is not proof against Corruption. A corrupt House of Commons can be no check on the prodigality of Administration; and therefore, without a melioration of Parliament on the principles of the Association, the same ruinous system of Government, under which we have already suffered so much, must be expected to prevail again.

It is true, the Minister of Corruption has found, that, in the hour of national calamity, his accustomed arts were of little avail; at that critical period, his less-hardy adherents were struck with remorse at the wild havock made by their assistance in this dismembered empire; they dreaded the rising discontent of the people, and shrunk from the support of an odious Administration. The Cornish Burgesses, the Cinque-Port Barons, and the rest of the faithful Band returned by the little Venal Boroughs, were found unequal to the task of Ministerial Defence.—Against that mercenary tribe the Representatives of the Counties and principal Towns, backed by a large majority of the kingdom, had hitherto
contended

contended ineffectually, but, on the near approach of ruin, their zeal, their unanimity prevailed, and Parliament exerted the long-neglected power of controul.

But can it be forgotten that even this tardy interposition depended on a multitude of contingencies, without whose casual combination the British People might yet have been groaning, without a prospect of relief, under the complicated misery of a Corrupt Administration and a War of Ambition, for the forcible subjugation of their American Brethren! In conformity to the spirit of that Parliamentary Restriction, measures tending to a pacification with the Colonies have been negotiated; their Independence has been provisionally acknowledged; and hostilities are now continued, not for the conquest of America, but for the purpose of defence alone, against a host of European enemies, leagued for our destruction. In this arduous conflict, though mighty difficulties remain to be surmounted, Britain may yet defend her possessions, and, perhaps, wrest out of the hands of her ancient foes the territories she has lost.—But should the struggle with the House of Bourbon be closed by a peace, honourable and advantageous to the full extent of our expectations, what compensation can be made for the waste of one hundred millions of money, and the dismemberment of the Empire? or what merit of Parliament can hence be pleaded to bar the projected

jected Reformation? In the extremity of national distress, the fears of that Assembly have overpowered the influence of Corruption; and after mischiefs have been permitted, which no wisdom can ever repair, the wild career of Ambition has been stopt at last, when it would have been madness to go on. Is this our security against Evil Government? Is this the boasted superiority of our Constitution? Or, is it not rather the most decisive proof of its degeneracy, and the absolute necessity for a Reformation of Parliament? Measures, lessening the corrupt influence of Ministers, have indeed received the recent sanction of the Legislature; but if the root remain the branches will soon shoot up again; and if a few venal electors be suffered still to place a multitude of Members as venal as themselves in the House of Commons, the disposition to venality, though checked in the hour of distress, will again predominate in that Assembly, and the means of gratification, in a different mode perhaps, will be employed once more by unscrupulous Ministers with fatal success. And when extravagance, misrule, and every ruinous attempt shall be repeated by that future corrupt Administration, we shall have reason to expect fortuitous events will not again combine to save us. In that case oppressive taxes must soon be the ruin of industry; and the consequence of ruined industry must be emigration, national bankruptcy, the loss of liberty, and the final degradation of our country.

But

But let the purity and independence of Parliament be effectually restored, and Ministers must support their authority by very different means, by the wisdom of their measures, and a steady adherence to the true interest of the community. Under the protection of their faithful Representatives the People would be conscious of the secure enjoyment of liberty; and they would be satisfied that those evils from which no Government is ever wholly exempt, would receive, from the interposition of Parliament, every alleviation, every mitigation which human wisdom could contrive. On the re-establishment of peace, there might then be a rational ground of hope, that an Administration, at once lenient and strictly frugal, might gradually disembarraßs our finances, lighten the load of taxes, and re-animate the industry and drooping commerce of the community. The unrivalled power of our country may be sunk never to rise again; but let her Constitution be restored, and Britain might yet be a prosperous and happy nation.

If the danger of innovation, that unceasing obstacle to all improvement, should here be objected, this Assembly will undoubtedly guard against that hazard, whatever it may be, by the prudence and moderation of their proposition; but vague apprehensions of danger will never deter them from attempting the correction of abuses, whose existence is certain, whose ruinous effects have been recently experienced, and whose

continuance must prove destructive to their dearest interests. And since these are the avowed sentiments of many of our fellow-citizens, it is the interest even of Parliament itself to admit some substantial Reformation; for the very existence of that Assembly must be precarious, when it has lost in any great degree the esteem and confidence of the People.

Happily the apparent disposition of Parliament, the declared approbation of the Cabinet, and above all, the rising spirit of the nation, afford a prospect of success. If therefore it should be the pleasure of the County of York to re-appoint their Committee to support an application to the House of Commons, for a more equal Representation of the People, and to shorten the duration of Parliament, their best efforts shall be employed in their service with fidelity and unremitted zeal, till, by the **RESTORATION OF THE CONSTITUTION** on the general principles of the Association, the Liberty of Britain shall be placed once more upon a solid and secure foundation.

With these sentiments, and in pursuance of the authority intrusted to them by a former Meeting of the County, the Committee have called their Constituents together, to take into their consideration what measures may be proper for the Redress of Parliamentary abuses. But aware that the task of Reformation is as difficult to be performed as it is necessary to be undertaken,

undertaken, they have previously collected every information in their power, which might assist this respectable Assembly to judge what mode of application it will be prudent to adopt. The answers from different parts of the kingdom, to their Circular Letter of the first of November, with few exceptions, concur in recommending the Petition in general terms: But although the four Propositions of Reform, proposed in that letter, have been received with warm approbation by Committees and Corporations of great respect, and no disapprobation of these Propositions has been expressed by any Body of Men friendly to the Reformation of Parliament; yet the City of London, and the Counties of Sussex, Middlesex, and Huntingdon, having advised that the proposal of Instructions to your Members, to support those measures in Parliament, should be postponed, your Committee are of opinion that, for the preservation of union with the several petitioning Bodies, it is expedient that Instructions from this Meeting should be deferred; not without some Resolution, expressing our approbation of those articles of Reform. The Petition which I am directed to lay before the County is therefore drawn in general terms; and I also hold in my hand two Resolutions, approving the Propositions of the Circular Letter, and postponing the measure of Instructions, which will be respectively submitted to the consideration of this Assembly.

I now move, Mr. Chairman, that the Petition may be read.

Mr. H. DUNCOMBE rose to second the motion of the Rev. Mr. Wyvill. He begged leave to express the satisfaction he felt at Meeting his Constituents, to whom he was attached by every principle of duty and obligation; and he met them with the more satisfaction, as he trusted he had endeavoured to discharge the office they had conferred upon him with a laborious, and he hoped he might add, with an honest assiduity. With respect to the propriety of the Petition, he observed that the original excellency of the Constitution of our Government could be maintained only by a due preservation of the balance of its constituent parts. The democratical part had lost much weight, and the power of the people had greatly failed by the inequality of their Representation. Indeed, the people could not, with truth, be said *to be represented*, if the word *Representation* had any meaning in the English language. We had long seen the little venal decayed boroughs represented by persons of different descriptions, to whose very names their Constituents were perhaps strangers. Some wretched Contractor, who went to Parliament as he went to the Alley, in the way of speculation—Some Indian Governor, “rich with the spoils of plundered provinces,” who purchased, thereby, impunity to his crimes, by a vote of ready acquiescence to every Minister and every measure

measure—mutually supporting, and supported by, Ministerial Delinquency. A still greater grievance prevailed, and a new species of Parliamentary influence had been introduced. The Nabob of Arcot, and the Rajah of Tanjore, he was confidently assured, had now sitting in our Parliament no less than seven or eight Members, whose seats they had purchased. These Asiatic Princes, rivals in power and interest, and each occasionally connected with, or opposed to, the English East-India Company, have by corrupt means placed their respective Representatives in the British Senate. Nay, abuses still more alarming were to be apprehended. Was it unfair to argue, that by the same means, though to much more fatal purposes, our natural enemies, the French, might exert the same influence, and their Monarch might seat his Emissaries in our House of Commons? Yet, though such was the unhappy state of our Parliamentary Representation, he derived hope and consolation from the spirit and virtue of the people exerting themselves for its Redress, in concert with some of the greatest characters of this age and country. We know there are several men in high stations, who, though of different parties and discordant principles, are however united in this point—united all in the acknowledged necessity of Parliamentary Reformation. He therefore doubted not but, by unanimity and perseverance, success might still be obtained, and hoped any addi-

onal argument was needless to induce that Meeting to support the present Measure.

Mr. STANHOPE rose to give his hearty approbation to the proposed Petition. He said he had ever concurred in principle with the Association of Yorkshire, though, from its particular form, he did not think himself at liberty to sign it. He now derived some satisfaction from that circumstance, because it gave him an opportunity of declaring with the greater impartiality how firmly he approved of the Measures, and how highly he applauded the zeal, the integrity, and the astonishing labours of the Yorkshire Committee in the Public Cause, more particularly those of their excellent Chairman. That Gentleman, he observed, would not need *his* exhortations to proceed in the path he was pursuing, and whatever was the success of his labours, they would, he trusted, meet with the best of all earthly rewards—the Love and Approbation of his Fellow-Citizens.

He regretted the absence of Sir George Savile from that Meeting, but had the pleasure of acquainting it, that that worthy Representative was declared by his Physicians to be out of all danger, from the severe indisposition which had prevented his attending there. He was with Sir George on Sunday last, who said that “ he was sure his Constituents would do him the credit to believe, that he persevered in the same sentiments he had ever professed.”

Mr.

Mr. Stanhope, now adverting to the Petition before them, said, that whoever considers the state of Representation in this country, must be struck with its imperfection in a variety of instances. *The Burgage Tenures*, he observed, do not partake of any one quality belonging to the people. Their Members have no Constituents to represent or be answerable to. The only possible tie upon them is, that they are generally in the hands of the rich, who, if the country suffers, must suffer along with it. But the same observation holds with regard to the Lords, and to every opulent individual out of Parliament; whereas, a Member of the House of Commons stands not in the light of a Nobleman, but rather of an Attorney or Agent acting for others. Some circumstances relating to these boroughs were, he said, quite insulting. There is one in the county of Sussex, near the seat of a Peer, and his park-wall has *six or eight black stones* in it, every one of which has a *Vote* for a *Member of Parliament*. If we consider the state of Representation in this County, we shall find that, of the thirty Members which it sends to Parliament, eighteen are sent by boroughs of private property; and of the remaining twelve many are far from being purely constituted. He thought the thanks of the Meeting were particularly due to a Noble Lord (Lord Gallway) then present, who had stood forward in support of a Parliamentary Reform, although he was the Proprietor

of a borough in this county ; and had declared at the late County Meeting at Nottingham, that no private consideration of his own should stand in the way of the Public Good.

Mr. Stanhope said, it might perhaps be urged in favour of private boroughs, that they do no harm, but our complaint against them is, that they *do no Good*. To evince their state of mediocrity, he observed that in the divisions upon some late interesting questions in Parliament the Members for these boroughs balanced about equally, or as 28 to 29. He then took notice of other classes of pernicious boroughs, viz.—Those which for a century past have been under the influence of the First Lords of the *Treasury and Admiralty*, and the subject of continual contest between them; and those which are wholly *under the controul of the Minister*. There was, he said, another description of boroughs still worse; such as carry their freedom to market, and set it at a price: These, instead of controuling their Members, are controuled by them, and the Members themselves purchasing their seats as they would purchase any other property, with a view towards increasing their wealth, have *their* price also, and sell themselves to Ministry. Hence it is that the Nabob of Arcot has more votes in the British House of Commons than the whole County of York; and, what is still more lamentable, this evil fights against the morals as well as the liberties of the nation, threatening it
with

with the fate of the Italians, who from a corrupted people became an enslaved one, and have continued so for near twenty centuries.

He said that, taking the question in a more general point of view—admitting the House of Commons did *in any degree* answer the purposes of its trust, some defects might be overlooked. But had it done so? The national attention had for some years been drawn to the unfortunate American war. He believed, at its first commencement, there might be a majority for it; but for some years past there was clearly a majority of the nation against the farther prosecution of it. In the last Session but one, at least four fifths of the County Members opposed it, and also supported measures for checking the progress of Corruption. Yet though as considerable a majority of the People, and (he believed) of the Aristocracy too, as established the succession of the Princess Sophia, were against it, the American war was persevered in, and carried on with increasing expence and misfortune, solely by dint of the undue influence of the Crown over Parliament, nor at last deserted till the unfortunate campaign of 1781. From this recent instance, it appears that Parliament, in the most pressing circumstances, has not answered the purposes of its trust: Nay, it was the opinion of many, that, through the prevalence of the same influence, Lord North, the Minister whom all united to turn out, was every moment likely
to

to be again called in power ; therefore it was necessary we should persevere, and be upon our guard.

An argument had been used by some, that much had been already done. Much indeed *had* been done. The Contractors and Revenue Officers' bills were passed, and, through Mr. Burke's bills, some important economical regulations had been obtained. Mr. Stanhope here made a short digression in defence of that Gentleman, who, he conceived, had been more hardly thought of than he merited in the construction put upon his conduct, with respect to the supposed abandoning of part of the original object of his bills. But this was not the case : The Two White Staves, the Comptroller and Treasurer of the Household were suffered to remain, because they contribute to the splendor of the Crown, and are very ostensible places. The Ordnance was turned over to the Duke of Richmond, who suggested that Mr. Burke's regulations therein did not go far enough.—Fewer places were abolished by the bill of 1782, than that of 1780, because several were intended to be struck off by the Throne itself.

He begged pardon for this digression, professed himself a determined advocate for a Parliamentary Reform, and repeated his former observation, That the man who bought would sell : That the price of a Seat in Parliament was now better known than the price of a horse ; and
that

that without such a Reform, Parliamentary Representation would become a mere trade: All Ministers must have a majority, and those majorities must be bought, if they cannot be obtained by any other means. If the Plan of a more equal Representation should not prevail, the abolishing places would prove rather a grievance than otherwise, because now if a man votes against the interest of his Country, he is rewarded for so doing by a place. If these are abolished, he must be paid privately under the table, of course he becomes more dangerous, an open enemy being preferable to a secret one.

He stated one material consideration in favour of an additional County Representation, which was this: That it will emancipate the Minister from the hands of monied men; though he believed that the loans of the two last years arose from corrupt motives in the Minister; yet in general a Minister could not help himself, being in the power of monied people. The land bears the burthen of the war, and people will more cheerfully submit to that burthen, when they know it is imposed by their Representatives, and not by Money-Jobbers.

Some persons, he observed, pay a greater regard to *Authorities* than to arguments; he would therefore recur to a few authorities, illustrating the propriety and necessity of the present application for a Parliamentary Reform. He then read the opinions of Lord Bacon, President Montesquieu,

tesquieu, Mr. Locke, Lord Bolingbroke, and Mr. Justice Blackstone, on the danger of a corrupt influence prevailing in the Legislative Body, and the necessity of an equal and virtuous Representation. He also quoted the words of the great Earl of Chatham : " That if the rotten boroughs did not drop off themselves within the century, they must be amputated," and that beautiful image, used by the same Noble Earl, when he mentioned the necessity of " infusing fresh health and vigour into the sound part of our Representation, by the addition of County Members."

He adverted to the curious arguments used against the measure he was now enforcing, at a late Meeting of the County of Northumberland, viz. That if we called for more County Members, the Ministers would call for more Land-Tax. This, he said, was reversing the objections against the American war. THEN it was denied that Taxation and Representation go together. *Now* they cannot be separated, and we are not to be represented for fear of being taxed. The true answer to this reasoning is, " that a *good Government* is a *cheap one*, and that if we are well governed we shall not be oppressed."

It might perhaps be objected, That the present was an *improper time* to Petition Parliament. Mr. Charles Townsend used to say, Petitions were improper at two seasons ; the seasons of peace and the seasons of war. In peace, because they tended to disturb the general tranquillity ; and,
in

in war, because Ministers had sufficient employment for their abilities without being troubled with Petitions. Mr. Stanhope, however, thought this *just the proper time* : When we had felt the inconveniences resulting from a corrupt House of Commons, it was the right moment to emancipate ourselves from the tyranny of Ministers. *It was the proper time*, because the Minister solicited their support, and had pledged himself to give his assistance. The people, he observed, never got any thing from the Great, but when the Great stand in need of the People. He asked how Magna Charta was got?—Not in a time of peace. Finally, he exhorted that respectable Assembly, from these considerations, to persevere in their efforts, not doubting but they would be crowned with success.

Dr. SWINNEY, after complimenting Mr. Stanhope on the rectitude of his heart and the goodness of his head, expressed his highest approbation to the business of the day.

Mr. EDMUNDS dwelt upon the present inadequate state of the Representation ; rejoiced that a prospect of redress was at hand, and exhorted his countrymen to unite in a firm phalanx, and tell Parliament they expect relief, and must have it ; complimented the Committee on their able and unbiassed exertions in the public cause, and spoke in terms of the highest respect of their worthy Chairman, whose conduct, he said, was above all praise. The Petition, he said, was no party

party matter, it was neither calculated to embarrass the measures of Government, nor disturb the peace of the nation ; and he hoped in God it would be crowned with the desired success.

GENERAL HAL thought proper (as his Majesty had honoured him with the command of a body of his forces, and as he was consequently in a different situation from that in which he stood when last in that room) to declare his principles.—He was a most steady friend to Petitions of the People, and in that he thought himself a friend to the Crown. The Crown, he hoped, had now come over to the People. The interests of the former were inseparable from those of the latter. He hoped to see the Petition succeed, and to behold a free Parliament, by which the Crown as well as the People will be free.

Alderman Sir CHARLES TURNER came forward, and with great emotion of mind, expressed, in the warmest terms, his esteem and veneration for the worthy General, whose public avowal of sentiments, so pure and constitutional, situated as he was, must endear him to his fellow-citizens. Sir Charles, alluding to the ancient authorities quoted in favour of the present measure, declared that these had much less weight with him than the authority derived from the wise and upright conduct of the County of York in its late and present proceedings ; and he hoped his children and grand-children would prefer

prefer reading the accounts of the loyal and peaceable Meetings of that County, its Committee, and their Chairman, held in that place, to studying the classics. No man, he said, could object to the Petition before them—it was moderate and respectful. Sir Charles related a conversation which he held last Friday with the Chancellor of the Exchequer.—He told him he was coming to meet his Constituents, and asked if he should deliver any message from him respecting the Melioration of Parliament. Mr. Pitt answered, “That he most certainly meant to go fully into the matter after the holidays, when he should be better informed of the sense of the People of England, and when, after the negotiations for peace, now pending, he might be more at leisure to give the subject that consideration it merited.

Mr. HOGGARD rose next, and as he held a place in the Corporation of Beverley, thought it his duty to speak his mind on the present occasion. He gave the Meeting to understand, that he had the honour of being a Magistrate; and though *not* Chief Magistrate, yet Deputy to Sir James Pennyman, the present Mayor of Beverley. The Deputy then gave an account of a correspondence he had had with his Chief respecting the Circular Letter of the Committee, sent to different Corporations; who appeared by his answers to disapprove of an application for a Reform of Parliament, as not well timed.—The Deputy

Deputy also produced a letter which *he* recommended the Chamber of Beverley to send to Mr. Wyvill, but they declining to write, *he* thought it necessary to be produced and read at this Meeting. It disapproved of the Committee prescribing any Plan to Parliament, and thought it a more advisable step to contribute to the external defence of the kingdom. The purport of what the Speaker advanced seemed to go to prove, that Beverley was not a venal Corporation, and that it ought not to suffer with the others. What language, says he, have I heard this day—threaten Parliament!—abolish Boroughs!—abolish Corporations! sad arguments; What! disfranchise Beverley!—And so Mr. Deputy ended.

Sir WATTS HORTON thought that had Sir James Pennyman, the Principal, delivered his opinion personally, it would have come with better grace than by his Deputy. That the Petition was not at all affected by any thing which had been advanced by the Deputy. The letter which the Deputy had read was only his own private opinion, and the Chamber of Beverley had declined adopting it. He had heard of no threat to Parliament. They were only demanding what they conceived to be their rights. No innovation was intended. No alteration required in the form of the Constitution. It consisted of King, Lords, and Commons.—A fair Representation

Representation in the Commons is all the People desire, which at present they have not.

Mr. HILL took the same ground. The Constitution, he said, consisted of three parts: A King hereditary; hereditary Peers; and a House of Commons, which the Constitution supposes to be chosen by the People. Unless the People have a real, active, and effective Representation of themselves in Parliament, they cannot, with propriety, be said to have any share in the Government of this country. The privilege of the Commons House is, that the People are to grant their own money by their own Representatives. The present Petition, therefore, does no more than repeat the Petition of Rights, where it says, "That no man shall be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, or tax, without the COMMON CONSENT by Act of Parliament." To prove that we are not duly represented, a stronger case cannot happen than that of the last General Election, when, though the People were much discontented with their Members, yet, through the present defective frame of the House of Commons, they could do little towards the removal of those Members, or (till some time afterwards) of the Minister they had long disapproved. Mr. Hoggard had objected that this was not a proper time to petition: Fact and history would shew us, that the properest time to apply for the redress of a grievance, was *when it was felt*. An Honourable Gentleman had remarked that Mag-

VOL. II. E na

na Charta was not obtained in the time of peace; he might have added, that the famous Bill of Rights was also passed upon the emergency of the case when pressing grievances existed. The œconomical Petition of this County was presented under a felt grievance, and it was not without its effect: The House of Commons took it up, though in a time of war: Nor indeed is it their peculiar office to be employed in the management of a war. Petitioning he asserted to be the unalienable right of the People of England; as much their right as their lands or any other property; and, for the reasons before given, he highly approved of the Petition under consideration.

The EARL of SURREY remarked, that Mr. Wyvill and the other Gentlemen had spoken so fully to the measures under discussion, that little more was left for him to say, than to declare his entire approbation of those measures. He had, he said, lately conversed with Gentlemen of the London and Westminster Committees, who informed him that those Committees did not disapprove of the Propositions recommended by the Yorkshire Committee, otherwise than on account of the inexpediency of offering any specific Propositions at this time. That those Committees thought it better to Petition *generally*, as the means of meeting with universal approbation. His Lordship said, that an addition of County Members *must* be adopted: That the Duke of Richmond's

Richmond's Plan was merely theoretical, and generally deemed impracticable. Lord Surrey then related a conversation he had with his Grace the Duke of Richmond, who said that he had studied the Plan of a Parliamentary Reform from its source, and that he thought the Representation not perfect, unless every man was represented; but as he found it was thought impracticable, he was ready to support any other Plan that might by the Public be thought more likely to succeed. His Lordship said, he wished that all those persons who were opposite to the Petition now before them, would have stood forth and avowed such opposition. Only one had appeared; the Gentleman from Beverley, who need not be apprehensive for the fate of that borough, as his Lordship conceived it to be a respectable one. Indeed that Gentleman's attendance there shewed the borough to be conscious of the ground on which it stood. No person could be against the present Petition, except the Proprietors of purchased Boroughs. The conduct of Lord Gallway, the Proprietor of the Borough of Pontefract, who came there to support a measure, tending to overturn his own interest, and of another Gentleman then present, * (the Proprietor of half a borough) ought to be held

E 2

out

* Henry Peirse, Esq; of Bedale, Proprietor of half of the Borough of Northallerton; to whom, and to Lord Gallway, the vote of thanks by the County, on this occasion, was justly due.

out as a reproach to those men who wish to stand well with the People, and yet support in Parliament, with all their eloquence, the withholding from them those Rights which time has robbed them of. Before Lord Surrey sat down, he observed that he was lately appointed Lord Lieutenant of the West-Riding of this County, but he was as independent as ever. He was the Servant of the People, and ready to obey their commands. His Lordship concluded with observing, that the inequality of our Representation was a mortal grievance, which, if removed, our Constitution would stand a chance of perpetuity.

The Petition and the Resolutions approving the Propositions of the Circular Letter, and postponing the Measure of Instructions, having been adopted by the Meeting, Mr. Wyvill addressed the Meeting again.

Mr. CHAIRMAN,

The Petition having been adopted, with unanimous approbation by this Meeting, I rise without hesitation to propose the re-appointment of your Committee with its former powers. Without such a Deputed Body, the measures you have just agreed to can have no continued support. It is the great disadvantage of the People, that, in all their exertions, the Collective Body cannot frequently be called together ; it would be
too

too fatiguing to assemble the Freeholders from every part of this great County, on any but great and important questions. The appointment of a Committee to manage the detail of business, is usual in matters of less moment ; in a question of this magnitude it is absolutely necessary, it is indeed the only pacific measure by which you can have a chance of success. Before the commencement of these County Meetings, I found discontents prevailing, and I heard language which, in my apprehension, had a tendency to commotion : I thought it behoved an honest man to try what could be done for procuring Redress by regular and legal means. With this view I came forward from that situation of obscure, but happy independence, from which nothing could have brought me forth, but a sense of danger to the Liberties of our Country. What has been done by the Committee, appears to me to have been for the good of the country ; and I am also fully satisfied, it has been done lawfully. There was a time when men in power were not a little concerned to find out any illegality in the proceedings of your Committee : If there had been any, it much behoved them to point it out. If other arguments for the lawfulness of Committees were wanting, I should be satisfied in it from the acquiescence of those men whose interest it was to break them up. In the course of this business I have had my share of fatigue, I have met with obloquy and

reproach, but I stood forth from an apprehension of danger to the Constitution: I feel myself supported by the consciousness of having acted as became an honest man, unconnected with men in power or out of it: I am happy in the approbation which my friends have expressed; and and while I have the confidence of this Assembly, I shall not withdraw from the Public Service.

I therefore move that the Committee be re-appointed with its former powers.

The motion for re-appointing the Committee having been passed, Resolutions, expressing the sense of the Meeting, respecting the benefits which will accrue to the nation from the economical bills, &c. passed last Session, and thanking Lord Viscount Gallway, Mr. H. Peirse, and Mr. Frankland, for their disinterested support of Petition which affects their private property, were unanimously agreed to.

Lord GALLWAY then rose, and expressed his satisfaction in finding that any act he had done merited the approbation of so respectable an Assembly. His Lordship acquainted them that he had the honour of proposing a similar Petition to the present one at the late Meeting of Nottinghamshire, which, though then signed but by few names, the Meeting being thinly attended, (owing to insufficient notice) had now received the signature of a considerable majority of the Freeholders. Nothing should be wanting in his endeavours, either in or out of the House,

to promote the objects of these Petitions. His Lordship declared his persuasion, that as we have reason to think the present Ministry are with us in the measure of promoting an equality in the Parliamentary Representation, it cannot be urged forward in a better moment than the present.

The Meeting having also voted thanks to the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, he came forward, and said,

Mr. CHAIRMAN,

I feel myself much at a loss for words. I am much affected by the vote of thanks, by so respectable an Assembly. I can only say, since my conduct has the approbation of this Meeting, I trust I shall have the honesty and the courage to persevere in it.

NUMBER X.

Paper I.

Letter from the Committee of Southwark, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York, with the Resolution of the Southwark Committee, on Friday the 22d day of November, 1782, annexed.

Sir,

YOUR kind favour, conveying the sentiments of the Yorkshire Committee, I received the 20th instant, and agreeable to your request laid it before the first Meeting of the Southwark Committee, by whom I am desired to transmit to you the Resolutions of a General Meeting of the Electors of Southwark, holden at St. Margaret's Hill on Thursday last, and also the Resolutions of the Committee. I am further desired by the Southwark Committee to inform you, they will at all times be happy to receive any information the Gentlemen of the Yorkshire Committee may be pleased to communicate.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

RICH. CARPENTER SMITH.

AT a Meeting of the Southwark Committee
on Friday the 22d day of November,
1782,

RICHARD CARPENTER SMITH, Esq;
In the Chair.

THIS Meeting having taken into consideration a Letter received by Mr. Smith from the Rev. Mr. C. Wyvill, the Chairman of the Yorkshire Committee,

Resolved, That copies of the Resolutions and Petition, made and settled in Common Hall yesterday, be sent by the Chairman to Mr. Wyvill, and that he be acquainted that this Committee will adopt and mean to abide by the same.

Paper II.

Paper II.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Electors of Southwark, on the 21st day of November, 1782.

SOUTHWARK.

AT a Meeting of the Electors of this Borough in Town Hall assembled, on Thursday the 21st day of November, 1782, pursuant to public advertisement.

JOSEPH QUINCEY, Esq; in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, .

THAT the most excellent Constitution of England, as formed by our forefathers, appears to us in no circumstances more grievously defaced than in the present unequal Representation of the People, which continual experience hath proved to be no less productive of calamities to this country than destructive to the Rights of Englishmen.

Resolved unanimously, That without a comprehensive and thorough Reform of the Representation of the People, there can neither be any radical cure of the corruption arising from Ministerial influence, nor any permanent security
against

against treachery or faction, to the wisest and most virtuous, whose best support is from a House of Commons, which springs as ours was intended to do really and effectually from the mass of the people.

Resolved unanimously, That long Parliaments having been found by experience productive of bribery and corruption at elections, it is therefore highly necessary for the recovery and security of our liberties, and the true interest of the people, to re-establish that constitutional duration of Parliaments settled at the Revolution.

Resolved unanimously, That the Petition now read be approved and engrossed, and signed by the Chairman.

Resolved unanimously, That our Representatives be instructed, and they are hereby instructed to use their utmost endeavours to obtain effectually the grand objects of this Petition, and to present the said Petition to the Commons House of Parliament.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Richard Hotham, one of the Representatives for this borough, for his unremitting attendance on Parliamentary business, and for his steady and uniform conduct in supporting the true interest of this country in general, and the Borough of Southwark in particular, especially for his support given in the last Session, for a Committee to be appointed for an inquiry into the Representation of the kingdom, and

and for the voting for the shortening the duration of Parliament.

Resolved unanimously, That a Committee be appointed to correspond and confer with the other Committees of the Cities and Counties of the kingdom, for promoting the object of the Petition, and such other measures as may be conducive to Parliamentary Reformation.

Resolved unanimously, That the following gentlemen compose the Committee, viz. Mr. Dunkin, Mr. Henry Sumner, Mr. John Burnitt, Mr. Webster, and Mr. Speck, of St. John's;—Mr. Bonsfield, Mr. Griffin, and Mr. Holcombe, of St. Olave;—Richard Carpenter Smith, Esq; Mr. Bradley, and Mr. Stafford, of St. Saviour;—Mr. Saunders, of St. Thomas;—and William Winter, Esq; Mr. Henry Pigeon, sen. and Mr. Quincey, of St. George's.

Resolved unanimously, That the said Committee have power to add to their number.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to our worthy Members, for their ready attendance this day in the Town-Hall.

Resolved, That it is the instruction of this Common-Hall to the Representatives of this Borough, that they do vote for triennial Parliaments, in preference to septennial, whenever such a Bill shall be brought before the House of Commons—one dissentient.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this
Common

Common Hall be given to the Chairman, for his impartial behaviour.

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this day be published in the London Courant.

Signed, by order of the Meeting,
JOS. QUINCEY, Chairman.

Paper III.

Letter from ROBERT LAKE, Esq; Mayor of Bideford, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

BIDEFORD, Nov. 22, 1782.

Sir,

AS Mayor of this place, I was this day honoured with your printed proceedings of the Committee of Association for the County of York, on the 31st of October and the 1st instant, which I beg leave to assure you meet with my warmest approbation, but this town (though of no small consequence) hath not the honour of being represented in Parliament.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

ROB. LAKE,

Mayor of Bideford, Devon.

Paper IV.

*Letter from the Corporation of Tenby, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

BY the order and unanimous consent of the Mayor and Common Council of the Borough of Tenby, assembled on a general summons, signed by Lawrence Cook, Mayor; William Williams, Alderman and Town Clerk; Thomas Williams, Alderman; Henry Williams, Alderman; Robert Reed, Alderman; Evan Bevan, Chamberlain; Walter Bevan, John Sayer, Hugh Mountjoy, Harry Morgan, Common Councilmen of the said Borough.

Reverend Sir,

THE Mayor of this Borough having received account of the Proceedings of the Yorkshire Committee of Association, respecting Reformation of Parliament, with all convenient speed assembled the Common Council to consider the same. They think themselves highly honoured by the application of that respectable convention to the Corporation of Tenby for their opinion and advice; and hold themselves bound
to

to communicate their best sentiments on that very important subject.

First, they are perfectly sensible that there are many objectionable Boroughs; they cannot say how many, namely, such as are gone to decay, and have few or no constituents; for where there is scarce any one to be represented, representation should cease. But if the few Burgesses of such places be united with the Freeholders of their respective County, (as in County Boroughs) that seems a sufficient compensation.—A Representation also where the Crown has the ascendant, is totally unconstitutional; for Parliament is the Guardian of the Rights and Property of the Subject. Counties, undoubtedly, should have a greater weight in the Parliamentary scale; a great County being now equalled by even an *evanescent* Borough.—But most electoral Boroughs have now, more or less, lost the benefit of their privilege. Occasional Burgesses are so numerous as to out-poll Freemen through Right; and a benefit which should be *local*, no longer is so. The following persons have the best pretensions to local franchises, such as either before or after admission to their freedom, acquire a legal settlement there, by birth, service, apprenticeship, office, taxes, tenure, or property; such as have resided there some-time, especially if resident when made Burgesses; such as have married a freeman's daughter; served or serve a corporation office, or in the military by sea or land.

Secondly,

Secondly, As to the Septennial Bill, if Representatives abuse their trust, are corrupt; or speak not the voice of their Constituents, the sooner they can be exchanged the better: for if their own single opinion differs from that of their numerous Electors, the latter ought not to be suppressed, because it may prove the most orthodox. The most we think a Member (who, we allow, is so for himself as well as others) can do, is, after justly reporting the sense of his Constituents, to declare his own, and why he disapproves of theirs.

Thirdly, Copyholders of inheritance, whose property cannot be affected at the Lord of the Manor's will, but stands secure on the basis of invariable and permanent customs, ought to have a Representative; for laws may be made affecting copyholds solely, and such estates are liable to Parliamentary charges: a Representative can most effectually assert their cause.

Fourthly, fictitious and nominal votes should be by all means abolished in Scotland, and every where else.

I am, Reverend Sir,
 With great respect,
 Your most humble servant,
 W. WILLIAMS, Town Clerk.

P. S. Distinct from the Members of the Borough of Tenby, I beg to mention myself as a copyholder. At the last Election for Pembroke-shire.

shire, I told the Sheriff's Deputy, "I lived on a considerable Copyhold Estate of Inheritance, in the Parish and Manor of St. Florence, which I could not vote for, and therefore voted for a Freehold of 40s. a year in St. Mary's, in Tenby, which I did not live on."—As I was debarred from voting for a considerable Estate within the County, I sought amends through the other trivial Estate, entitling me to that right which the other was excluded from the honour of conferring on me; though the fine is certain, permanent, and small, being two-pence an acre, and a court-fee of sixteen-pence; a heriot, at death, of the best beast, for which 40s. is substituted; an annual fee-farm rent of eight-pence an acre paid to the auditor, as is done for many Freehold Estates also. We owe attendance at the Courts of the Manor, as persons also do at the Courts of Freehold Manors. We must transfer lands according to the constant custom; and these are all our obligations.—I know several Freeholders who have also Copynold Estates in Manors belonging to Lord Milford, yet voted against him. One in particular proved that his Lordship's own tenants had no right to vote, as his Lordship was only a grantee under the King, and had no power to convert the suspended Copyhold, in the Lord of the Manor's hands, into Freehold; as none under the Lord of the Manor has that power; nor could he grant a term on those Estates different from his own

OL. II. F from

from the Crown. These Electors shew that many Copyholders are not under so great an awe of the person who is or represents the Lord of the Manor, as Lessees of Freehold Estates frequently are of their respective Landlords.

I remain, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

W. WILLIAMS.

Paper V.

*Letter from the Lord PROVOST of Glasgow to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

COUNCIL CHAMBER, *Glasgow*, Nov. 28, 1782.

Sir,

I HAD the honour to receive your letter of the 1st instant, transmitting an account of the proceedings of the Committee of Association for the County of York, at their late Meeting, held on the 31st of October.

I observe that the object of these proceedings is to promote measures for the Reformation of Parliament: and for this purpose that the Yorkshire Committee wish to have a free communication

cation with the Corporation of Glasgow, on the subject of those abuses which are considered as injurious to the Constitution, "hoping, by their opinion and advice, to be enabled to judge what Propositions for the Reformation of Parliament it may be expedient to recommend to the intended General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th of December next."

Agreeable, therefore, to the wishes of so respectable a Body as the Yorkshire Association, I did not fail to lay these Proceedings, as well as the Letter you did me the honour to write me, before the Corporation of this City, who have instructed me to return you their best thanks for the very full and free communication of the sentiments of your Associated Committee, and to assure you that they shall be ready at all times and on all occasions to interpose their feeble aid in promoting every proper measure that shall have for its object the preservation of our invaluable Constitution, as well as a Reform of those real grievances which are connected with Parliamentary Representation.

In discussing this important subject, the Corporation of Glasgow have much satisfaction in observing that the Yorkshire Committee approve of the respect and deference to Parliament which other Associated Bodies of great respectability in England have manifested, in requesting in general terms a Redress of *Parliamentary grievances*. And they have no doubt but, in the specific Plan

of Reformation which is proposed to be recommended to Parliament, the same delicacy, moderation, and attention to the dignity of the Legislature, will mark the conduct of every Constituent Body in the kingdom, as the best means of insuring success in the great national object they have in view.

As sincere Friends of the Constitution, the Corporation of Glasgow do not hesitate in declaring that they would be sorry to see too extensive a System of Reformation rashly obtruded on Parliament, least, by grasping at too much, the whole might miscarry. They are very doubtful too, whether the present moment is the best calculated for such objects of difficult discussion, in the midst of a formidable and complicated war, when the ablest heads and the best hearts in the nation ought to be engaged in the more immediate consideration of the means most proper to extricate this country from its present calamitous situation.

Although all ranks of men in Great-Britain may readily admit the propriety of Parliamentary Reform, I fear it will not be easy to procure the concurrence of any Constituent Body as to a specific mode of improvement.

On this head the Corporation of Glasgow are by no means prepared to give a decided opinion: If they descended to matters specific, they would naturally be led to consider their own situation, and the trading towns on the bank

of the Clyde, forming a body of near 100,000 people, represented only by one Member, and that Member elected by four Delegates, of which this City only sends one, who is chosen by the Corporation composed of no more than thirty individuals.

It will certainly be a proper measure, and a great object of National Legislative Reform, to abolish all the small Boroughs in every part of the united kingdom, more particularly those under the influence of the Crown. And if an additional Representation is to be given to the Metropolis, it is humbly submitted whether it should not extend in the same proportion to the great Towns of Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, and others not at present Represented in Parliament.

The Corporation of Glasgow cannot sufficiently applaud the moderation and true public spirit of the Yorkshire Committee, in resolving to abandon any of those Propositions that shall not receive the approbation and concurrence of a decided majority of the principal Towns and Counties who support the claim of Parliamentary Reformation, and thereby sacrifice their wishes to that harmony and union, without which it is impossible to expect success.

I have the honour to be with great respect and consideration, Sir,

Your most obedient, most humble servant,
PAT. COLQUHOUN, Provost.

Paper VI.

Letter from the Chairman of the 'Committee of the County of Flint, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

Sir,

I AM instructed by the Flintshire Committee, at their Meeting on Wednesday last, to assure you that they think themselves much honoured by the open and candid communication of the sentiments of the Yorkshire Gentlemen. They entirely approve of the respect and deference shewn to the Commons House of Parliament, whilst they must at the same time admire the true constitutional spirit which appears in their instructions to their Representatives. They are not apprehensive that any man who wishes to promote a Reform in Parliament, can raise a material objection to the disfranchisement of the obnoxious Boroughs : Half the money now expended in bribing their Members would purchase the fee simple, either of the Proprietor or the Burgesses, at the market price ; this could not bear the shadow of injustice, and in some cases, perhaps, it may be necessary to consolidate

two

two or three, or more, as was done in Scotland at the union, and has been the case of all the Boroughs in this part of the Principality. We are satisfied that without something of this kind, the addition to the County Members will avail very little indeed.

The Gentlemen who attended the last Meeting, in Flintshire, have unanimously adopted your instructions to be proposed to that County next month. They have also taken the liberty to add the following :

“ That in conjunction with the above methods of preserving the Constitution, you will use your utmost endeavours to lessen, by all fair and practicable means, the enormous patronage of the Crown ; since as long as the Minister has every thing to give that every man wants, it will be impossible that the Parliament or the People should be preserved incorrupt.”

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

W. D. SHIPLEY.

HAZELHURCH-PARK, Nov. 29, 1782.

Paper VII.

Letter from the Mayor of Gloucester to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York, with Resolutions by the City of Gloucester annexed.

Sir,

I HAD the honour of your Letter of the 1st instant, which contains objects of such great national importance, that I thought it my duty to convene the Corporation of this City together, and lay it before them. The Corporation ever desirous of co-operating with the respectable Committee of the County of York in the great work of Reformation, and to show how much they wish for unanimity upon these national points, immediately came to Resolutions, copies whereof I have the honour to inclose. The Corporation also think that the original object of the Petitioning Counties and Bodies of national economy should not be lost sight of, and have therefore come to the 5th Resolution to instruct the Representatives of this city to that end, and hope for the concurrence of the Yorkshire Meeting therein.

I am, Sir, with great esteem,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

RICHARD WEBB, Mayor.

GLOUCESTER, Nov. 30, 1782

City of Gloucester, }
 To wit. } AT a Common Council Houſe,
 held at the Tolſey, in the ſame City, on
 Wedneſday the 27th day of November,
 in the twenty-third year of the reign of
 our Sovereign Lord George the Third,
 by the Grace of God, of Great-Britain,
 France, and Ireland, King, Defender of
 the Faith, and ſo forth, and in the year
 of our Lord one thouſand ſeven hun-
 dred and eighty-two,

Reſolved unanimoſly, That the following
 Petition ſhall paſs under the Seal of this Corpo-
 ration, and be preſented by the Representatives
 of this City, at a proper time, under the direc-
 tion of the Mayor.

*To the Honourable the Houſe of Commons of
 Great-Britain in Parliament aſſembled.*

The Humble Petition of the Mayor, Aldermen,
 Sheriffs, and Common Council of the City of
 Glouceſter, in Council aſſembled,

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners conſider the Britiſh
 Conſtitution as originally framed, the moſt per-
 feſt ſyſtem of good government that can poſſibly
 exiſt, being admirably calculated to promote the
 eaſe and happineſs of the ſubjeſt.

Your Petitioners further ſhew, That the al-
 terations

terations which have been introduced into that Constitution are inimical to those free principles on which it is founded, and that the extreme inequality in the Representation of the People, the long duration of Parliaments, and the very expensive mode of Election for Representatives, are measures fundamentally wrong, and grievances of an alarming tendency.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly intreat this Honourable House to take the same into their most serious consideration, and apply such remedy to these great Constitutional evils, as to the wisdom of the House shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Resolved unanimously, That the Representatives of this City shall be instructed,

1st, To support a Bill which may be brought into Parliament for abolishing at least fifty of the most obnoxious Boroughs, providing for the Electors, in the several Boroughs abolished, a proper gratuitous compensation for their extinguished franchises; and enabling them to vote together with the Freeholders in elections for Knights of the respective Shires to which they belong, and also adding an adequate number of Members, not less than a hundred in a due proportion, to the several Counties and the Metropolis,

2d, To move or to support a motion for the repeal of the Septennial act,

3d, Also

3d, Also to support any Bill which may be brought into Parliament for admitting Proprietors of copyhold lands of inheritance, with fine certain, of the clear yearly value of forty shillings, to vote at county elections of Members of Parliament throughout the kingdom,

4th, Also to support the application of any County in Scotland for setting aside nominal and fictitious votes, and for regulating Elections to Parliaments, in that part of the kingdom, in a manner agreeable to the true intent and spirit of the Constitution,

5th, and lastly, To support and further all Propositions for national œconomy.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting shall be given to the Mayor for calling this House, and laying Mr. Wyvill's Letter before them.

Resolved unanimously, That these Resolutions shall be published in the next Gloucester newspapers, and in the St. James's Chronicle, and also in the Bristol news-paper.

Signed, by order,

J. W. JEPSON, Deputy
Town Clerk.

Paper VIII.

*Letter from the Sheriff of the County of Moray,
to the Chairman of the Committee of Association
of the County of York.*

BLERVIE near FERRES, *County of Moray*,
November 26, 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, inclosing the Proceedings of the Committee of Association for the County of York. The respectable names which composed that meeting, must give their decisions great weight and influence; but it does not become a person of such limited and confined views to suggest his inadequate sentiments upon subjects which require such deep reflection, and enlargement of thought. The rapid progress of nominal and fictitious qualifications, by which the independency and freedom of election are so essentially wounded, pointed out to some Gentlemen of liberal principles to call a Meeting of real proprietors, in order to collect the sense of the respectable part of the County upon a matter of such interesting concern. The Gentlemen were unanimously of opinion, that the practice was unconstitutional,
and

and subject to the greatest abuses; and they appointed a Committee at Edinburgh to correspond and concur with the other Counties.—Sir James Grant has been repeatedly Præses of several Meetings held at Edinburgh, at which landed proprietors from every County attended; and as most of the counties have published similar resolutions, I make no doubt but the scheme will meet with general approbation, unless where genuine sentiment is obstructed and over-ruled by particular influence. I shall transmit your letter to Sir James Grant, who is alone able, and I am certain will be inclined upon application, to give the necessary satisfaction relative to the points you mention; and his sentiments will be explanatory of all the steps that have been taken at the different Committees. I presume that every friend to liberty and virtuous independence, without predilection or partial bias, must ardently wish a fair and equal representation over the whole island, but the mode of obtaining this invaluable object, *Hoc opus, hic labor est*. I trust, Sir, you will do me the justice to believe that my general manner of writing upon a subject in which you are so much interested, proceeds from want of proper light, and from no idea inconsistent with the respect and esteem with which I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

LEWIS DUFF.

Paper IX.

*Letter from the Sheriff of Fife, to the Chairman of
the Committee of Association of the County of
York.*

CUPAR, *County of Fife*, Dec. 2, 1782.

Sir,

I was favoured with your letter of the first of last month, regarding the Resolutions of the Association for the County of York. I shall take the first opportunity of laying your letter before a General Meeting of the County. Mean time I beg leave to acquaint you, that the Freeholders in this part of the united kingdom, are taking the necessary steps for restoring the former purity of elections, previous to an application to Parliament upon that subject.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

CLAUD BOSWELL, Sheriff
of Fife.

Paper X.

Paper X.

*Letter from the Constables of Manchester, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

Rev. Sir,

WE have been favoured with yours of the first inst. containing an account of the Proceedings of those Gentlemen who call themselves a Committee of Association for the County of York.

The town of Manchester is fortunately no Corporation ; but we have consulted many of its principal inhabitants upon the important subject of your letter, and they are generally of opinion, that it is by no means proper, in the present critical situation of public affairs, to raise disputes and dissention in the kingdom about altering and amending our excellent Constitution, under which the inhabitants of Great-Britain and her colonies have, for this last century, enjoyed more real liberty and property than any nation upon earth. They are afraid it will tend to disturb that harmony and unanimity now so essentially necessary to the welfare
of

of this Country, and to divert the attention of our Rulers from what ought to be the first of their concerns, namely, to bring to a speedy and happy end the present dangerous and expensive war, upon the event of which not only the future improvements of constitution, but even the existence of the British Empire depends.

We have the honour to be, with all due deference and respect,

Rev. Sir,

Your very humble servants,

GEO. BARTON, }
JAMES BILLINGE, } Constables.

MANCHESTER, Nov. 29, 1782.

Paper XI.

Paper XI.

Letter from the Mayor of Petersfield, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

PETERSFIELD, DEC. 2, 1782.

Sir,

I HAVE laid your Letter before the most respectable persons in Petersfield, who desire me to acquaint you, that they are very apprehensive that you and your Association will do much injury to Old England. They feel that they live happy under the Constitution, as by law established, and they desire no alterations.

I am, Sir,
Your most humble servant,
EDWARD PERRYER, Mayor.

Paper XII.

*Letter from the Mayor of Poole, to the Chairman
of the Committee of Association of the County
of York.*

POOLE, Dec. 2, 1781.

Sir,

AT a time when the almost certainty of losing the Thirteen Provinces of America, overwhelms with grief every one who wishes well to the country; I am astonished that you, who ought to think seriously, should patronize and support any Plan of pretended Reformation in the State, a measure which his Majesty told you in his speech, soon after the late riots in London, was always productive either of ruin to the persons concerned, or of a Revolution in Government. However, in consequence of your Circular Letter, I have convened this Corporation, and laid it before them, who are unanimous of opinion, that Associations, respecting the several matters hinted at in your Letter, are in all events extremely dangerous; and, I assure you, their sentiments entirely coincide with my own: and we think ourselves better employed in supporting the present laws than

than we should be in lending any assistance to new model the Constitution of Great-Britain,—the best in the Universe, and the object of envy to our Enemies.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

BENJAMIN LISTER, Mayor.

Paper XIII.

*Letter from the Commonalty of Poole, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association
of the County of York.*

Town and County of POOLE,
Dec. 12, 1781.

Rev. Sir,

ON the receipt of your Circular Letter, the Mayor of this Corporation privately summoned together the Bailiffs and Burgesses, in number about eighty, leaving out the Commonalty, in number about two hundred, (although they are an integral part of the Corporate Body, as established by all the charters)

because he well knew the Commonalty would have unanimously resolved and advised the same patriotic steps that you are taking. The result of the Meeting of the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Burgesſes, you are already acquainted with by the Letter they have ſent you.

However we think it incumbent on us to inform you that we cannot overlook ſo partial a method of collecting the ſentiments of this place, eſpecially as we had previously reſolved on preſenting a reſpectful Petition to Parliament, ſimilar to the one you intend preſenting, which will be cheerfully ſigned by all the Commonalty.—We would alſo give ſimilar inſtructions to the Members of this place, were we not certain that they would diſregard them; the reaſon is obvious,—the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Burgeſſes, have monopolized the choice of the Representatives, by excluding the Commonalty, (the latter are ſtaunch Whigs: we wiſh it was in our power to ſay as much for the other part of the Corporation;) therefore no part of the kingdom has a juſter claim to wiſh for a more equal Representation than this opulent ſea-port, whoſe chartered rights have long been infringed with impunity: Strange as it may appear, even the votes of our Freeholders are rejected at elections here and in the County of Dorſet.

We anxiously wait for an opportunity to aſſert our franchises, and flatter ourſelves the time is not far diſtant, when (favoured by ſo deſirable
an

an event as a national reform in Representation) particular complaints on that head will be better attended to. Interim we beg leave to inform you that we approve of the four Articles you recommend, and only wish, that instead of fifty, the whole of the venal influenced boroughs may be abolished ; for, till that is accomplished, we cannot hope for an independent and equal Representation of the People.—We shall at all times be happy to be favoured with your sentiments and correspondence, and sincerely wishing your virtuous endeavours may be crowned with success,

We have the honour to be, with the greatest respect and esteem,

Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

J. BIRD,
THO. ANSLEY,
RICH. HAYWARD,
FR. PENNEY,
RICH. MILLER,
W. HAYWARD,
ROB. MILLER,
J. BUNDOCK,
RICH. WATT'S,
GEO. DURELL.

Paper XIV.

**Letter from the Town Clerk of Hereford, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.**

HEREFORD, Dec. 3, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

I AM directed by the Mayor and Corporation of this City, to acknowledge the receipt of your printed Letter of the 1st of last month, directed to the Mayor of this City, upon the Subject of Parliamentary abuses, and the sentiments of the York Association for a reformation of them, and to inform you that we entirely approve of the mode they have adopted and intend to pursue for bringing about that Reformation so much to be desired.

We are of opinion that nothing can tend so much to the real injury of this country as the unequal Representation of it in Parliament, and wish for nothing more than to see a total annihilation of all its small venal and corrupt boroughs, and that the power of Representation
so

so taken from them may be added to the counties and the great towns and cities, but without any addition to the present number of Representatives, which we think fully sufficient. And we are also of opinion that the shortening the duration of our Parliaments may render them more free and independent, and settle the Constitution of this Country on a firmer basis than at present it seems to be.

That to obtain these happy effects we will exert every proper means in our power, by addressing the Members of our City on this subject, and to obtain any other Reform which may tend to the good and prosperity of this country.

I am, Sir,
Your very obedient servant,
L. LAMBE, Town Clerk
of Hereford.

Paper XV.

Letter from the Chairman of the Westminster Committee, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

ST. JAMES'S STREET, Dec. 4, 1782.

Sir,

I lost no time in laying before the Westminster Committee the letter you was so obliging as to write to me, together with the Proceedings of the Yorkshire Committee; and I am directed by the Committee to thank you in their name for your communication, and to assure you that they will be happy at all times to communicate and consult with the Yorkshire Committee upon the best means of promoting a Parliamentary Reform, as they are convinced concert and union among the friends to this great object are most likely means of attaining it. At the same time, in consequence of the desire you express to know their sentiments upon the subject of your letter, they have directed me to say, that the plan proposed in the said letter, appears to them to deserve the most serious consideration, and to merit the thanks
of

of all friends to Parliamentary Reform ; but that it is their opinion, after having taken into consideration every circumstance relative to the present state of the business, that it is more eligible at present to avoid proposing any specific plan either in the Petitions intended to be presented to Parliament, or in Instructions to Members. This opinion is founded principally, as I conceive, upon an apprehension that the dissimilarity of the plans likely to be proposed in the different Petitions and Instructions, would rather afford an additional argument to those who are enemies to the whole of the scheme.

I am, with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient

Humble servant,

C. J. FOX,

Chairman of the Westminster
Committee.

Paper XVI.

*Letter from the Inhabitants of Tiverton, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

TIVERTON, Dec. 4, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

The active part your County hath taken in attempting to reform the abuses in the British Constitution, induces us (in the name and at the request of a great number of respectable inhabitants of this town) to write you, of the steps taken here towards obtaining a more equal and proportionate representation. Your being placed deservedly at the head of the York Committee, we presume to hope will be a sufficient apology for addressing you on this occasion.

This town is, or was once (next to Exeter) the most flourishing and populous in the West: Its inhabitants are near five thousand, and consist chiefly of merchants, traders, and manufacturers; but the most opulent and considerable part of them have been hitherto excluded from the privilege of voting for Representatives in Parliament by a Corporation of twenty-five men only, (chose by themselves) many of them non-residents

residents and placemen. This grievance hath long call'd aloud for redress. Considering therefore the present times favourable to equal liberty, a General Meeting was called Thursday last, and a Petition (in general terms) produced, approved, and signed by several hundreds—It will be presented after the holidays by Mr. Alderman Townsend, and seconded by Sir Watkin Lewes. We flatter ourselves your utmost assistance and exertions will be given for bringing to an happy conclusion this great national grievance. And that the peculiar situation of Tiverton will be described to all your friends in the House of Commons, because it is presumed a general reform in the Constitution may be brought about by a statement of disproportionate representation in particular Boroughs.

The Mayor of this place lately received your Circular Letter, and other papers, but as he is inimical, they were artfully concealed from the inhabitants. Any thing you might advise the inhabitants of this town to do in concert with other towns or places, you will be so good to communicate to us, or either of us, who are,

Rev. Sir,

Your obedient servants,
 NICHOLAS DENNYS, Merchant.
 GEO. OWENS, Attorney.
 MARTIN DUNSFORD, Merchant.
 WM. SMALE, jun. Merchant.

Paper XVII.

Paper XVII.

Resolutions of the Corporation of Leicester, communicated by the Town Clerk to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

LEICESTER, Dec. 5, 1782

A Printed Letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill, (by the direction of the Committee of Association for the County of York) having been received by Mr. Mayor, wherein he is requested to lay before this Corporation, certain propositions which the Yorkshire Gentlemen wish to recommend to the General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th instant, if such Propositions should meet the approbation of the Corporation of Leicester, and other respectable bodies. The Corporation of Leicester think it right to publish those Propositions and their Resolves.

PROPOSITIONS.

1st, To instruct their Representatives to introduce, or to support, a Bill in Parliament, for abolishing at least fifty of the most obnoxious Boroughs; providing for the Electors in the several

several Boroughs abolished, a proper gratuitous compensation for their extinguished franchises; and enabling them to vote together with the Freeholders in Elections for Knights of the respective shires to which they belong; and also adding an adequate number of Members, not less than an hundred, in a due proportion to the several Counties, and the Metropolis.

2d, To instruct their Representatives to move, or to support, a motion for the repeal of the Septennial Bill.

3d, For admitting Proprietors of copyhold lands of inheritance, with fine certain, of the clear yearly value of forty shillings, to vote at County Elections of Members of Parliament throughout the kingdom.

4th, and lastly, To support the application of any County in Scotland, for setting aside nominal and fictitious votes, and for regulating Elections to Parliament in that part of the kingdom in a manner agreeable to the true intent and spirit of the Constitution.

RESOLVES:

Resolved, That all Committees and Associations, (other than Parliamentary ones) for the purpose of altering the Constitution, to speak favourably of them, tend to create, at least, anarchy and confusion.

Resolved, That instructions be sent to the Representatives of this Borough, strenuously
to

to oppose such propositions, if they should be brought into the House of Commons.

Resolved, That these Resolutions be printed in the public papers, and a copy be sent to the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, to lay before the Yorkshire Committee.

By order of the Corporation of Leicester,
J. HEYRICK, Town-Clerk.

Paper XVIII.

Letter from the Town Clerk of York, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

YORK, 7th Dec. 1782.

Sir,

I AM directed to acquaint you, by the Lord Mayor of this City, that in consequence of your Letter, of the 1st of November last, his Lordship caused a Meeting of the Corporation of York to be held at the Guildhall, on Friday the 29th of the same month, to consider that letter; which was then read, and the Mayor and Commonalty, there assembled, agreed to the four propositions stated by the Committee of Association for the County of York, as proper to be adopted for the Reform of Parliamentary Abuses; and, at the same time, appointed a Committee

Committee to prepare an answer to your favor,
by whose order I communicate this information,
and have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most humble and obedient servant,
GEO. TOWNEND, Common Clerk
of the said City.

Paper XIX.

*Letter from the Mayor of Bedford, to the Chair-
man of the Committee of Association of the
County of York.*

BEDFORD, 7th Dec. 1782.

Rev. Sir,

SOON after the receipt of
your's, I summoned the Corporation to meet in
council, to communicate to them the contents.
The proposed applications to Parliament, for the
regulations mentioned in yours, were approved;
and an order was entered in the Corporation's
books to the following purport:—

IT is ordered that instructions be given to the
Members of Parliament who represent this Bo-
rough, that they give their support, when a bill
shall be brought into the House for the Regula-
tions mentioned in the Remonstrance of the
County of York. I have the honour to be,

Rev. Sir, Your much obliged, and
Most obedient humble servant,
WILLIAM PATEMAN, Mayor.

Paper XX.

*Letter from the Town Clerk of Bridport, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

Sir,

I AM ordered by the Corporation of this Borough to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 1st ultimo. In answer, the Gentlemen above alluded to congratulate their country on the great exertions made by the Association for the County of York, in order to effect a Reform in Parliament.—They most sincerely hope, that their strenuous endeavours to promote so truly laudable an end, will shortly be attended with success.

They would not presume to dictate to the Committee, whose wisdom is so conspicuous in all their plans which they have laid before the public; but, at the same time, they take the liberty to hint, that it is their opinion, if an additional number of Members could be added to the Counties and the Metropolis, this would in some measure supersede the necessity of abolishing the little Boroughs for the present.—Though this latter may be a desirable object, yet

nant with true patriotism, may meet with due countenance and support.

With the greatest deference and respect, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And truly humble servant,

SAMUEL TOMLYNS,

Town Clerk.

BRIDPORT, Dec. 9, 1782.

Paper XXI.

Letter from JOHN CHUBB, Esq; late Chairman of the Committee of Bridgwater, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

Sir,

ON my return home, I am this instant favoured with your Letter of the 1st of November, inclosing the account of the Proceedings of the Yorkshire Committee, and proposing a communication of sentiments on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. I would not delay for a moment my acknowledgments, though

though I lament that I must now make them as an individual, and not as Chairman of the Committee of Bridgewater, who once endeavoured to add their mite of assistance towards the general cause. In this town the effects of that corrupt and arbitrary Power, which has pervaded the whole nation, have proved too strong for us;* and some of its strenuous opposers, through fatigue, through prudence, and through dependency, have given up the struggle, except the mere local one, with a rich Lord, whose yoke has long galled us. This, like other little towns, is a strong proof that we have no less to complain of the extent of the Aristocratic Power, than we have of the increased influence of the Crown. How little a way will the addition of an hundred County Members go towards effecting a cure for this, unless the obnoxious Boroughs are abolished according to your first Proposition: The main obstacle to this abolition seems to be the unwillingness of the holders of most of those seats in Parliament to part with their (kind of) family possessions. But will not those Gentlemen be equally unwilling to diminish the proportionable consequence of those seats by the introduction of greater number into the House? Even at the worst, perhaps, a middle way may be taken, if it cannot be done better—amend the Constitution of those very

H 2

worst

* I fear the Committee of the County is not much better off.
Mr. CHUBB.

worst of Boroughs, where the election of Representatives is in the hands of a few, a Corporation and honorary Freemen, neither resident, nor owners of a spot, within five hundred miles of the place. This will, indeed, be but a trifling advance in the business—but I cannot think we should neglect the taking a single step towards reform, because we cannot at once get to the summit of our wishes; nor reject *some* because we cannot mend *all*. But I trespass on your time, which has been apparently fully employed in the discussion of all these material and useful points. I shall take this opportunity to offer to your good self and to the worthy Committee of Yorkshire, for your long and arduous application for the Public good, the sincere thanks of a few, who, though not of sufficient consequence to act longer as a Committee, will individually lend every assistance to so glorious a work to the utmost of their power.

I am, with high esteem and respect,

Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

JOHN CHUBB.

BRIDGEWATER, DEC. 10, 1782.

Paper XXII.

Paper XXII.

Letter from the Corporation of Truro, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York, with a Letter from the Town Clerk of Truro prefixed.

TRURO, Dec. 12, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

I AM directed by the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, of the Borough of Truro, in Common-Hall assembled, to transmit you the inclosed answer to your Letter to them of the 1st of November,

And I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

JOHN THOMAS,
Town Clerk.

TRURO, *Council-Hall*, Dec. 8, 1781.

Rev. Sir,

WE have received from you the account of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association of the County of York, and shall ever think gentlemen entitled to respect and esteem, who use their best endeavours to correct abuses in the Constitution and Government of their country. But we submit it to your consideration, whether a Reformation of Parliament is so likely to be effected by an alteration in the mode of electing the Members of the Lower House, as by a proper attention to their purity when they take their seats, and whilst they act as the Representative Body of the nation; for as long as there are men who do not scruple to purchase seats in Parliament, and Government possesses the means of influencing them, we incline to think that the methods proposed by the County of York will not cure the evil they wish to remedy.

It is generally observed throughout the West of England, and it is too visible to be denied, that where the Electors in Boroughs are most numerous they are most venal; and it is conceivable that an increase even of County Members might spread contagion amongst the lower class of Freeholders.—We think too, that short Parliaments would create much disorder and confusion.

It

It is unreasonable to expect more virtue in the lower orders of mankind than amongst men of education and fortune. If then gentlemen returned would not take their seats without first satisfying the House that they came there without undue influence, and such influence, when proved, was to be imputed to them as an infamous crime, for which they should be expelled, we conceive that Parliament would receive the most essential reformation, and the Constitution, excellent in itself, would remain unhurt.

Pardon us, Sir, for thus freely giving you our sentiments, but it is in compliance with your request, and we are, with esteem and respect,

Sir, your most obedient,

And most humble servants,

The MAYOR, ALDERMEN, and BURGESSES,
of the Borough of Truro.

Paper XXIII.

*Letter from the Town Clerk of Wallingford, to
the Chairman of the Committee of Association
of the County of York.*

Sir,

I AM desired by Edward Wells, Esquire, Mayor of this Borough, to inform you, that in consequence of your Letter to him of the 1st of November last, relative to a Parliamentary Reform, he called a Common Council of the Borough, who unanimously acceded to the sentiments and advice contained in the Letter, and have resolved to instruct our Representatives to support the Petition of the County of York, whenever the same shall be presented to Parliament.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Sir, your obedient

And most humble servant,

JOHN ALLNATT,

Town Clerk of the Borough of
Wallingford, Berks.

Dec. 13, 1782.

Paper XXIV.

Paper XXIV.

Letter from the Mayor of Dartmouth, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

DARTMOUTH, Dec. 13, 1782.

Sir,

I WAS duly honoured with your Letter of the 1st of November, inclosing a copy of the Resolutions of the Yorkshire Committee, on which subject I have conversed with the Gentlemen of this Borough, and though I am convinced that they are (as every other person must be) sensible of the necessity of a Reform in the Representation of this country, yet it seems to be their opinion, that the people pointing out any specific remedy to Parliament, may rather retard than forward their wishes, and therefore think that they should only pray in general terms for the Redress of those grievances so justly complained of:—Indeed the gentlemen of this town, being chiefly engaged in merchandise, have not much turned their thoughts to this subject; but should a measure of this nature be brought

brought forward in Parliament, we doubt not but our Representatives will consider solely the interest of their country, and our instructions to them shall not be wanting in so very great and material a concern.

As a part of the People of England at large, this Corporation begs to express their approbation of the Proceedings of the Yorkshire Committee, and to return their thanks to you, Sir, for your great assiduity, in so good a cause, of which no man is more truly sensible

Than, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN BROWNE,

Mayor.

Paper XXV.

Letter from the Chairman of the Suffex Committee, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

CAVENDISH-SQUARE, DEC. 14, 1782.

Sir,

IN consequence of your Letter of the 1st of November, by direction of the Committee of Association for the County of York, to the Duke of Richmond and to the Chairman of the Suffex Committee, such Members as were in London, and could conveniently be met with, were consulted, and were of opinion, that the calling of a Meeting of the County of Suffex to deliberate on the various Propositions contained in your Letter, would not at this moment answer the laudable ends you have in view; but a Meeting of the Committee have been called to consider of your Letter, and held this day. They have directed me to inform you, that they heartily join, with the rest of the kingdom, in grateful thanks to the Yorkshire Committee, for their great exertions in favour of Parliamentary Reform.

The

The Committee of the County of Suffex are thoroughly sensible of the truth of your observation, that there cannot be a probability of success but by preserving harmony and union amongst the several Associated and Petitioning Bodies.

They are also aware of the objection that will be taken, if it is not known on what grounds and to what extent the people desire the Reformation of Parliament should proceed. They clearly see the decisive advantage that would result from an intire and perfect union of the whole kingdom upon some specific measure, which, in such case, must command success: But the Suffex Committee are very apprehensive that the opinions of the people, although generally made up as to the existence of the abuse, are not agreed upon the specific remedy; and they fear that, from the necessary want of communication, the inconveniences that attend frequent Meetings, and the difficulty of discussing a variety of complex Propositions, in such large Assemblies, it will be impossible to attain the desired end of unanimity by the method you propose. The opinion of the County of Suffex might certainly be taken on the several heads mentioned in your Letter, but other heads might also be proposed, and on these various matters, their sentiments, or those of other Counties, to whom it is presumed the Committee for the County of York has made similar applications, might be different from each other.

other.—Nothing can be more candid and fair than the declaration of the Yorkshire Committee, that if some of their Propositions should not meet with the concurrence of a decided majority of the Petitioning Counties, that they would not hesitate to sacrifice their wishes to the preservation of harmony: it is to be hoped that other Bodies entertain the same good dispositions, with respect to objects that are not of the first magnitude, but there may be other points, from which if the opinions of great Counties are once taken, they may not afterwards be so ready to depart. The Sussex Committee are, therefore, of opinion, that it will be more prudent not to risque the establishing such decided differences of opinion, as would afford to the Enemies of all Reformation the strongest ground of opposition, for they think it by far a less fatal objection, that it should be said, that the people are not agreed as to the manner of Reform, than that they disagree by proposing Plans possibly opposite to each other. They are, therefore, of opinion, that it would be most adviseable for all the Petitioning Counties to adhere to the example which has been set by several—of complaining only of the abuse, and leaving the remedy to the wisdom of Parliament.—The Sussex Committee understand that some Plan will be proposed in Parliament either by a Committee, or on the part of Government, and they think it will be much safer to take the opinion of the Counties,

Counties, on such a different measure, than to call upon them at large to propose a variety of schemes. It is with great deference to the Committee of the County of York, that the Suffex Committee submit these observations and the Plan above-mentioned which they mean to follow.

I have the honour to be, with great respect,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,
W. FRANKLAND.

Paper XXVI.

*Letter from the Corporation of Langport, to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

LANGPORT, Dec. 14, 1782.

Rev. Sir,

IN consequence of a Letter, which I have lately had the honour to receive from you, inclosing an account of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association for the County of York, I have this day laid the cause before the Corporation of this Borough, and herewith you will receive its sentiments therein.
The

The Corporation, truly sensible of the great Reform that is necessary to be made in Parliament, as well in the unequal Representation of the People therein, as in shortening the duration of Parliaments, earnestly wishes for a general Redress of those grievances, and concurs in the opinion of the Yorkshire Committee, that some particular Propositions of Reform should be stated ; and, therefore, the several Propositions, made by the Yorkshire Committee, being read, the Corporation does heartily give its concurrence therein, and highly approves of the same.

I am directed to communicate to you, the high esteem this Corporation entertains of the Committee of Association for the County of York, their worthy Chairman, and the measures they pursue ; and that it will be always ready to co-operate with them in any measure they shall adopt to obtain the desirable object they have in view.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most humble servants,

GEORGE STUCKEY,
Portreve.

Paper XXVII.

Letter from the Chairman of the Huntingdonshire Committee of Association, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

Sir,

THE illness of Sir Robert Bernard has prevented the Committee of Association for the County of Huntingdon from returning an earlier answer to your letter, communicating the Opinion and Proceedings of the Committee of Yorkshire, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform; and in the absence of that gentleman I am directed to acquaint you with the high sense which the Committee of Huntingdonshire entertain of the zeal and perseverance of the Committee of Yorkshire in the public cause.

They are of opinion, that if the example of those respectable Bodies which have already determined to present Petitions to Parliament, requesting in general terms a fuller and more equal Representation, and a more Constitutional duration of Parliament: And the unanimous Resolution

lution of the general Meeting, at the Thatched-House Tavern, previous to the prorogation last summer, to avoid any specific Propositions relative to Parliamentary Reform is adhered to ; it may be reasonably expected that the subject will be maturely investigated by a Committee of the House of Commons, and the wishes of the People gratified in their fullest extent.

Till the event of a general application to Parliament can be known, the Committee of Huntingdonshire are persuaded that Instructions to Representatives to support specific Propositions would be premature, and might, by creating disunion, be attended with dangerous consequences.

I have the honour to be,

With great respect, Sir, &c.

CARYSFORT,
Chairman for the day.

Paper XXVIII.

*Letter from the Portreeve and Electors of Penryn,
to the Chairman of the Committee of Association
of the County of York, with a Letter from
Sir FRANCIS BASSETT prefixed.*

LONDON, February 1, 1783.

Sir,

AT the desire of my Constituents, the Portreeve and Electors of the Borough of Penryn, I have the honour of transmitting you the inclosed; it may be, perhaps, unnecessary to assure you, that my sentiments are exactly the same, with theirs, on the subject which they have addressed you.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

FR. BASSETT.

To the Rev. C. WYVILL,

PENRYN.

PENRYN, February 22, 1783.

Sir,

AS we find the York Committee have applied to several of the Boroughs, in this neighbourhood, for their opinions respecting a proposed change in the Representation of the People in Parliament: We, the Portreeve and Electors of the Borough of Penryn, think it right (though not called upon by you) to give our sentiments on that subject, lest our silence should be construed into an acquiescence in a measure which we cannot approve.

We have no reason to doubt, Sir, but that you are actuated by the purest motives in the alteration which you wish to make in the Representation; and we trust you will give us credit for acting with the same degree of purity, though holding opinions diametrically opposite to yours.

We trust you will not permit the idle and groundless censure on Cornish Boroughs, in general, to prevent you from giving us a fair and impartial hearing. We must then declare, that our principles are the same as are avowed by many of you; that is, That we are sincerely attached to the Constitution, as it was established at the Glorious Revolution, which we understand to be the same as now subsists. Our Ancestors, in that moment, when tyranny was overturned and subdued, took the most effectual

means to confine, within proper bounds, the King's Prerogative, and to define the Rights of the People. The greatest men of *that*, or, perhaps *any* age, were for some time employed in the great work of Political Reformation, and yet it did not occur to them, that it would be right to adopt any such measure as is now proposed by you: This certainly is not positive, but it is presumptive proof, that such a measure would be unwise and unnecessary; that our Constitution, as established at the Revolution, is the most perfect that ever existed, will hardly, we believe, be denied: and whatever opinions we may have of your abilities, and those of your associates, we hardly think you will succeed in improving that Constitution which the wisdom of ages has approved. We think the present measure proposed by you, *unjust, unwise, and ill-timed*: *unjust* because we cannot conceive that it would be more fair to deprive us of our Rights and Franchises, without any just cause being assigned, than it would be to deprive us of our property. In either case we should consider ourselves injured. No instance has yet occurred of so violent an exertion of power, except in the case of a few boroughs which have been disfranchised as a punishment for their own crimes: But if, Sir, the innocent are to meet with the same punishment as the guilty, who is safe.—By the law, as it now stands, we have a right to send two Representatives to Parliament; and, when

when that law is altered, we must be injured, and without a cause, for the complaint of the Corruption of Boroughs, in general, will only be an argument against those Boroughs that are proved to be corrupted: Let such be punished, but do not punish the innocent with the guilty. The measure would be *unwise*, inasmuch as every unjust measure must be so; and *ill-timed*, because it would be wrong to take up the time of Parliament in discussions upon such a subject, at a time when every exertion and the greatest vigour and unanimity are required to enable us to make head against our numerous enemies. Every thing, therefore, which tends to divide Parliament and the Nation, in general, must be ill-timed: As to the compensation, proposed by some, to be given to the disfranchised Boroughs; we must, Sir, declare, we will accept of no such compensation. We look upon our right to send Members to Parliament as invaluable, and nothing can compensate for the loss of it.

It has been proposed, by some indeed, not to attempt disfranchising the Boroughs, but to add a certain number of Members to the Counties; to this Plan there are fewer objections, but it would be certainly attended with innumerable difficulties. The great objection at present made to the House of Commons is, that it is too numerous: If that objection is well founded, would it not be impolitic to increase the number; be-

sides we would wish to know who is, in that case, to fix the proportion of Members.

The Constitution, which we now live under, we have long experienced the blessings of, and we wish not to see it altered : we may be made miserable by a change, but we can never be happier than we feel ourselves at present. If a Committee of the House of Commons should be appointed to take the state of the Representation into their consideration, many of them may have the best intentions, but enemies of the Constitution may creep into it ; and, under the pretence of amending, may subvert and destroy that Constitution they were appointed to improve : And let us ask, if when you, Sir, have set so many opinions afloat, you are certain that you can “ ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm ? ” If the Constitution is to be altered, there is great reason to believe it will be altered for the worse ? In that case posterity will have reason to execrate your name ; for, when they feel real evils, they will be little inclined to consider whether your motives were good or bad ; nor indeed would it be of any use to them to inquire : Let us, therefore, entreat you, Sir, to consider seriously, ere it be too late, the consequences of the proposed change.—You are now on the brink of a precipice, down which you are probably about to drag millions with you : It will be too late for consideration, when you have plunged your country into, perhaps, irremediable

irremediable misery; but let what will happen, we flatter ourselves with having done our duty to ourselves and the public in thus giving you our opinions, which, we trust, we have done coolly and dispassionately, and in such a manner as to give you no just cause of offence.

We are, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

WILLIAM CROWGEY,

Portreeve,

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Tho. Treeve, | Benj. Heame, |
| Benjamin Moon, | Samuel Sweet, |
| James Bawden, | Robert Dillon, |
| Richard Bufvin, | Edward Hodge, |
| James Edgcome, | Rob. Dillon, jun. |
| Edw. Penwarne, | J. Penwarne, |
| John Dawney, | J. Penwarne, jun. |
| John Hillings, | James Johns, |

And eighty-four more.

NUMBER XI.

Paper I.

*Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County
of Kent, on the 8th day of June, 1782.*

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of
the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and
Freeholders of the County of Kent, holden
at the Town-Hall, at Maidstone, on the
8th of June, 1782.

THE Sheriff being absent, through illness,
John Sawbridge, Esq; was unanimously
voted in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously, That an humble Ad-
dress be presented to his Majesty, to thank his
Majesty for having changed his Councils: and
the following Address being read, was unani-
mously approved of:—

To

To the KING's most excellent MAJESTY,

The Humble Address of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, of the County of Kent.

Most gracious Sovereign,

ATTACHED to your Royal Person and Family by every tie of loyalty and affection, We beg leave to return your Majesty our cordial thanks for having complied with the wishes of your People, by making a change in your Councils, and appointing those men to the Administration of Affairs, who, from their abilities and integrity, and from having pledged themselves to Constitutional Liberty, are deservedly the favourites of the Public,

We entertain the most grateful sense of your Majesty's benign intentions to alleviate the burthens of your People, by a Reform in your Civil Establishment, and by your recommendation to Parliament, of an effectual Plan of oeconomy through every branch of the Public Expenditure; and we feel the most perfect satisfaction that your Majesty has no reserves with your People.—Such a declaration cannot fail to produce, in a loyal People, an emulation to convince your Majesty, that your reliance on their affections, for the true honour of your Crown and Government, is not misplaced.

Permit

Permit us, gracious Sire, to congratulate your Majesty on the late signal and important success of your arms, at a period so critical to national welfare. A success which, when directed to true political effect by a wise Administration, will, we trust, lead to the only justifiable object of War—an honourable Peace.

Resolved unanimously, That the said Address be signed by the Chairman of this Meeting, on behalf of this Meeting, and be presented to his Majesty by the Chairman, attended by the Members of the County.

Resolved almost unanimously, That a Petition be presented to the House of Commons, the next Session of Parliament, on the subject of the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament.

A motion was then made, that this Meeting do adjourn, which motion was rejected almost unanimously.

The question being then put upon the following Petition, which was read to the Meeting, it passed unanimously.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain
in Parliament assembled :*

The Humble Petition of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, of the County of Kent,

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners, sensible of the excellency of that Constitution under which they have the happiness to live, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the true principles on which it is founded.

Your Petitioners further shew, That it is necessary to the welfare of the People, that the Commons' House of Parliament should have a common interest with the nation; and that in the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, the House of Commons do not sufficiently speak the voice of the People.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Honourable House to take into their most serious consideration, the present inadequate state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, and to apply such remedy to this great Constitutional evil, as to this Honourable House may seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Resolved

Resolved almost unanimously, That the Committee appointed and confirmed by the former Meetings of this County, be confirmed by this Meeting, with the same powers as before.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be returned to the Members of this County, for their diligent attendance and upright conduct in Parliament.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be returned to the Sheriff, for having called this Meeting.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be returned to the Chairman of this Meeting for his conduct.

JOHN SAWBRIDGE,
Chairman.

Paper II.

Proceedings at a General Meeting of the City of Westminster, held in Westminster-Hall, on the 17th day of July, 1782.

Wednesday, July 17, 1782, being the day appointed for a General Meeting of the Electors of Westminster, to consider of a Petition to the House of Commons, for a more equal Representation of the People, and for shortening the duration of Parliament, about a quarter past one Mr. Fox and the Westminster Committee appeared on the Hustings, when Mr. Fox being unanimously called into the Chair, came forward, and addressed himself to the Electors as follows:

Gentlemen,

IT is my duty, upon the present occasion, to explain to you the immediate purpose of your Meeting this day. You all recollect, that an idea has been previously suggested in this Hall, and received, I believe, with the sincere and unanimous approbation of every gentleman present, that there is an actual and insurmountable necessity, if the future preservation of the liberties

liberties of the people of this country is an object at all worth attention, that some change should be made in the Parliamentary Representation of the People in the House of Commons. At the time, however, when this opinion was originally mentioned, the period did not seem opportune for adopting any measure for carrying it into execution; there were little grounds for any expectation that the then Administration would have taken any active part in contributing to the completion of a measure so repugnant to their known principles, and so hostile to their interests: Upon a late change, however, not the last that took place, in an Administration which, had all the Members of it been as sincere in their principles, and in their attention to the true interests of this country, as some were, would still have subsisted, and I hope to the honour of themselves, and the general advantage of the people, the time was thought fortunate and proper for bringing this important point publicly forward, and for introducing it regularly and formally in Parliament; in consequence of these opinions, a motion was made in Parliament, by a young man of the most signal abilities, and whose public conduct had so entirely concurred with your own sentiments and wishes, that you expressed a desire for him to become one of your Representatives in Parliament, proposing, that a Committee should be appointed, for taking into consideration the present state of Parliamentary Representation

Representation in the House of Commons; the honourable author of this motion, I mean Mr. William Pitt, supported it in the House with all that ability which characterises him, and with all that firmness, integrity, and dignity, which I believe to be no less in the number of his excellencies; but though his arguments appeared to me unanswerable, they did not carry with them that influence in the House which, in my mind, was due to them, and the motion was over-ruled by a small majority. It appeared that the House of Commons were not yet ripe for such a measure; and the principal argument adduced as the foundation of their rejection, was this, that such an alteration did not appear to be the general or real wish of the people of this country; if, however, subsequent events have proved the contrary, have proved that this was the real wish of the people of this country, I trust we shall hear no more of such an objection.

It is for the purpose of obtaining your sentiments again upon this important subject that this Meeting has been called, and I entertain no doubt that the citizens of Westminster will concur in the common zeal upon this occasion, and will readily embrace every Constitutional means for bringing about an event which I think, and as all wise and candid men must think, so fundamentally and essentially necessary for the preservation of our rights and liberties as Englishmen. A worthy Alderman, a respectable friend of mine, will

will presently make a motion to you upon that subject, and will read I believe a Petition to the House of Commons for your signing. I shall hope you will address the House in terms of respect and decency, but at the same time with that firmness and determination which the importance of the subject requires, and which becomes Englishmen petitioning for the preservation of their rights and privileges. I should wish also that your Petition may be couched as much as possible in general terms: If a specific mode be pointed out, it may probably give rise to objections, and may involve in its own fate the temporary destruction of the great principle itself, upon which that mode is founded. A subject of so complex and difficult a nature will necessarily produce variety of opinions, even among men who wish well to the general principle, and will certainly give opportunities to those who are hostile to it to effect the rejection of your Petition *in toto*; if, on the contrary, you express your wishes in general terms, very little fear, I trust, is to be entertained that they will be properly attended to, and that the object of the Petition will be completed—for this is a clear, plain, broad truth, that no man in the House of Commons will venture to deny, that a pure, uncorrupt, general representation of the people is the great characteristic of the English Constitution, and that the preservation of it depends upon the due and proper support of that essential quality.—
That

That it is not properly supported now, is evident to the meanest understanding, and no man will be found therefore hardy or weak enough to deny either the truth of the facts upon which your Petition will be founded, or the justice and expediency of its object.

I shall say no more upon this subject at present, but after the worthy Alderman has made his motion to you, if any conversation should arise upon it, I shall hope for the opportunity of addressing myself to you again. I cannot, however, help detaining you one moment longer, for the purpose of expressing my warm and sincere gratitude for the numberless favours which I have received from the inhabitants of Westminster. I must have had a heart callous indeed, and I trust very different from its real texture, if I could have been insensible to the various obligations I have been so uniformly and repeatedly honoured with from you. Your kindness this day adds one more favour to the number; I am sorry I have not the pleasure of seeing a larger number assembled on the present important occasion; but this is a circumstance owing, undoubtedly, to the unfortunate badness of the day. Gentlemen, I have only now to add, that whilst I possess your approbation, whilst I am honoured with your confidence, I shall never fear the arts of any persons whatever. Whether they be open enemies or insidious friends, I shall equally disregard their efforts to injure me, content

tent with the approbation of my numerous and respectable constituents, who have hitherto done justice to the motives by which I have been influenced in my public conduct, and I doubt not will continue to do so.

MAJOR CARTWRIGHT then moved, that the three following Resolutions might be read;— which motion being seconded by Dr. Jebb, they were read by Mr. Fox, and agreed to unanimously.

Resolved, That the most excellent Constitution of England, as formed by our forefathers, appears to us in no circumstances more grievously defaced than in the present unequal Representation of the People, and duration of Parliament, which continual experience hath proved to be no less productive of calamities to this country than deprecatory of the rights of Englishmen.

Resolved, That without a comprehensive and thorough Reform of the Representation of the People, and the duration of Parliament, there can neither be any radical cure of the corruption, which, after the best regulations of office, or partial reforms, may still be employed on the Representative Body, by bad Ministers, nor any permanent security against treachery or faction, to the wisest and most virtuous, whose best support is from a House of Commons which springs, as ours was intended to do, really and effectually from the mass of the People.

Resolved,

Resolved, That the motion made on the 7th of May last, by the Hon. William Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Alderman Sawbridge, for the appointment of a Committee of the House of Commons, to enquire into the present unequal Representation of the People in Parliament, having been defeated by a call for the order of the day, we consider it incumbent on us, at this time, to make known our sentiments on this subject, and to declare, that we will never relax in our endeavours to obtain a correction of the above grievances, and to transmit to posterity a purer Representation, without which they can neither be free nor happy.

Mr. SAWBRIDGE then came forward, and said,

Gentlemen,

After the business of the day has been so ably opened to you by the honourable Chairman, and after the Resolutions that you have unanimously come to; it is unnecessary for me to say any thing upon the occasion, but merely to solicit your concurrence in the following motion:

Resolved, That a Petition be presented to the House of Commons, for a Reform in the Representation of the People, and in the duration of Parliament.

With your permission I will read the Petition to you.

Mr. Sawbridge then read the following Petition.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain
in Parliament assembled :*

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the
City and Liberty of Westminster,

Sheweth,

THAT the present disproportioned and inadequate Representation of the Commons of this realm, and unconstitutional duration of Parliament, are grievances of so great magnitude as to require immediate attention and effectual redress.

That your Petitioners do farther beg leave to suggest, that the observance of a due proportion of Representation throughout the kingdom, is not only the natural, true, and constitutional, but the most simple and practicable mode of correcting the present defects in the National Representation; and the only species of Reform, that can either render general justice, or give general satisfaction, or afford a complete security for the future purity of this branch of the Legislature.

And your Petitioners humbly trust this House will be pleased to consider, that in the subject of this Petition is included all that can be dear to Citizens and to Men.

Your Petitioners humbly intreat this Honourable House to take the premises into its consideration,

sideration, in full expectation that this Honourable House will bestow its serious attention to their complaints, examine their claims with impartiality, and finally afford its utmost aid in obtaining justice.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

Major CARTWRIGHT. I second that motion; Gentlemen, it is with particular satisfaction I second the present motion, I feel more pleasure at this Meeting than any other I was ever present at, because I am convinced, and have long been so, without such a Reform, as is the object and prayer of that Petition, neither King, nor Minister, nor the People of this Country, can be safe, or free or happy, in any respect. A great deal has been said upon this subject formerly, I shall, therefore, have occasion to say the less upon the present occasion. The last time I had the honour to be before you upon a similar business, I took notice of two or three facts which I thought deserved your notice; there are two or three others I shall suggest, to impress the necessity of such a Reform more thoroughly upon your minds.

I am given to understand, the number of Electors for Westminster, upon some elections has not been less than 8 or 9000, and the whole number of Electors are no less than 10,000. Upon a supposition that this is the case, I think it is well worth your consideration, to see whe-

ther you are represented in any degree of proportion with other parts of the kingdom. To set that matter before you in a proper point of view, I will recal to your recollection what I observed upon a preceding occasion, that in some districts, 13,000 Freeholders choose nine Members, which is an average of 1400 and some odd for the choice of two Members, but you have only two Members, who have 10,000 Electors; their average for one Member is about 706, your average is the majority of 5000 to one Member: Consider what an enormous disproportion that is;—you will observe in other places a greater disproportion between the numbers of the Electors and their Representatives; there are 43,000 citizens, yourselves make a fourth part of them nearly, that choose 52 Members; you who are a fourth part of that number only choose 2 of those Representatives; the average in this case is, 413 Electors to one Representative; yours you recollect is the majority of 5000; but this is not the worst, as you go farther you see the evil increase; there are 41,000 Electors for Boroughs, small Towns, and Sea-Ports, that choose 369 Members; the average there is only 55 Electors to every Member, yours is the majority of 5000; but it is still worse than all this, if you go farther, for taking particular Boroughs, you will find 7000 Electors choose 257 Members; upon an average 27 Voters to a Representative; and in some particular

particular Towns, 340 Borough Electors choose 50 Members; upon an average of seven to every Member in those rotten Boroughs and Cinque-Ports, and you have no more than one Member to the majority of 5000; therefore you need not wonder your property is made a sacrifice to those that represent those small numbers of persons; every body knows they must be subject to bribery and corruption. A great deal has been said about the Representation of the landed interest, and a Representation of the trading interest; I beg leave to observe, the present Representation is not a Representation of either, in any degree of fairness or common sense; you must conclude from what I have already explained to you, that in fact, the present Representation is the Representation of great families, who have great overbearing influence in particular Counties; it is the Representation likewise of the Crown, who has the command over a great number of little beggarly Boroughs and sea-port Towns; for as the Crown nominates Members in those places, it is the Representation of the Crown; which has no business with the Representation of the House of Commons; it is the Representation of a great number of individuals that have purchased old houses to send themselves to Parliament; I mean, to bring themselves in independent of their Electors; it is the Representa-

tion of corrupt adventurers that come from the East-Indies, with a great deal of money, who have bribed themselves into Parliament, independent of the power of the Electors; the use they make of those seats in Parliament, you all very well know; you have had experience in the present calamitous war, which I hope in God will speedily be put an end to, or I see no salvation for this kingdom. This Petition is to reform these abuses, there have been some objections started, I shall take notice of none but that of the impracticability of obtaining such a Reform as is now hinted at in this present Petition, for gaining a proportionable Representation in Parliament. One argument to shew it is not impracticable is this, that it is not found impracticable for ingenious Ministers to tax every thing you eat, drink, and wear, even to every individual pot of porter the poor labouring man drinks, and even to every pound of soap the poor washerwoman makes use of, to clean the clothes of herself and family. Now, if all can be taxed, there may be ways and means found that all may be represented; and if they cannot only tax every man, but every morsel of meat, and every atom of clothing, then all the argument of impracticability, with regard to making a Reform complete enough to answer every purpose, appears to me the most absurd of all arguments that ever was offered. I shall
not

not take up more of your time, having seconded the motion for the Petition.

Dr. JFBB. My worthy friend, Major Cartwright, having so ably enforced the necessity of a Reform in the Commons House of Parliament, —and explained the grounds and reasons on which the prayer of the proposed Petition is founded, it is unnecessary for me to add any thing to what he has suggested on these subjects.

A question, however, may be asked, In what manner will it be necessary for you to act, in order to carry your wishes into effect?

In the first place it will be necessary to render the signing the Petition as general as possible.

I would recommend to you studiously to inquire into, and thoroughly to comprehend, the nature of the Reform you demand;—examine into the grounds and reasons of the Petition;—and if you approve its prayer—testify your approbation by your voluntary signature.—I would not, on any account, wish you to sign what you do not comprehend—nor be induced to support a Petition from any other principle than a firm persuasion of the propriety of its prayer.—Copies will be dispersed in proper places.—A due degree of attention will not be wanting in your Committee;—but if you wish success, you must yourselves appear zealous in the cause. It is necessary that the signature be numerous, otherwise we shall give efficacy to the argument used against us in the House of Commons—in which
it

it was asserted, that the Reformation requested was not the wish of the People.

A second method, by which an unarmed People can effect a constitutional purpose, is by *perseverance* and a manly *firmness* in the mode of urging their request.

It is your duty, if you be persuaded of the justice of your cause, to declare repeatedly and steadily in the ear of Parliament, that no consideration will induce you to suspend your exertions, until you have obtained substantial justice—and that nothing but the concession of your constitutional demand can induce you, without murmuring, to bear those numerous taxes, which, unless you be fairly represented, can by no means be equitably imposed.—It is my hope—it is my expectation, that in a short time one cry will go through the land—and that the voice of the People will be loud and universal from every quarter of the kingdom—that the language of every constituent to every Representative will be,—**RESTORE THE CONSTITUTION OF OUR COUNTRY.**

A third mode which will assist you in effecting your purpose, is, to watch diligently who those men are, that uniformly in Parliament support your cause—and who they are that have the confidence to oppose it; and by giving to those who support it, the fullest evidences of your approbation—treating the opponents of your just and righteous claims with those marks of your
displeasure.

displeasure, which their unconstitutional and unworthy conduct deserves.—Be assured that public censure—for I do not mean to counsel you to any illegal act, is a powerful weapon, which cannot be wrested from you by any machinations of your adversaries. The most exalted Peer,—however he may pride himself in the distinctions he enjoys—however elevated he may esteem his station above the common mass of the People, cannot easily console himself under the loss of their approbation and favour. This method, Gentlemen, of carrying your purpose into execution, is perfectly agreeable to the genius of the English Constitution. The power of taxation resides in the English Commons—by this power the People control the Crown—this power is delegated to their Representatives—but the power of CENSURE the People still retain—and thus are enabled to retain their Representatives, when fairly chosen, within the limits of their duty.

With respect to the prayer of the present Petition, you will observe, it is expressed in the most general terms—it requests nothing specific—this was concerted, in order to obviate that diversity of sentiment which must necessarily take place, before the subject has been properly discussed—we state, because we all feel the grievance—we leave the consideration of the remedy to Parliament, trusting that Parliament will explore what is just and equal, and do what justice shall require.—I have no occasion to inform you, that
a noble

a noble and extensive plan for an equal, annual, and universal representation of the Commons was proposed in the Upper House of Parliament, by that ornament of the human species, the Duke of Richmond.—To that plan, which corresponds also to the idea of Major Cartwright, I intirely assent.—Yet, though attached to the idea of annual elections, I can, with perfect consistency, join in the present Petition to the House of Commons, to take the matter into their serious consideration, while, at the same time, those who are equally attached to triennial Parliaments, may, with equal consistency, unite in the same request.

I must farther observe to you, that the present is a moment singularly favourable to our views. There is a general disposition throughout England to concur in this salutary work; and we have also at the head of public affairs, a set of men who have professed and manifested a zealous attachment to our cause. It is with heartfelt satisfaction that I request you to turn your attention to that exalted character, the Duke of Richmond, who may in a manner be said to live only to effect this great, this important purpose. We have also the express declarations of the Earl of Shelburne, as may be seen in his letter to the County of Wilts, wherein he declares, that the People of England have a right to an annual election of their Representatives, and an equal Representation, founded upon an higher authority

rity than any Act or Acts of Parliament can confer. We have, therefore, a right to conclude, that a Nobleman, who so solemnly declared his sentiments in the face of the People, will, now he is possessed of power, steadily support our equitable and constitutional demand. We have also a right to declare, that if he fails in gratifying our reasonable expectations, he will justly incur that public censure, the nature of which I have before delineated, and lose all title to the estimation of his fellow-citizens. In such circumstances, the most splendid distinctions of office will afford a very imperfect consolation to the Earl of Shelburne. I will also mention another worthy character now in power, and attached to your cause: I mean the illustrious son of that illustrious statesman, the Earl of Chatham. He has already merited much of his country, by moving for the appointment of a Committee to consider our request.

With all these prospects you will be wanting to yourselves and your posterity, if you do not manifest your attachment to your excellent cause in the manner I have described. Sign the Petition: recommend it to your neighbours; and declare those who are against it to be unworthy your confidence. Be assured, if you will yourselves properly support it, no human power can prevent your success. The Representation of the People is the exclusive concern of the People. To the House of Lords, particular offices and powers

powers are assigned, with which the People cannot with propriety interfere: but with respect to the House of Commons, their business is your business, their rights your rights. I will ask you, is it reasonable that you should pay taxes, and have no controul over the men who impose them? And if you have not a sufficient controul, you have no controul. I will also ask you, if you, who are so immediately concerned in this great question, will not exert yourselves, do you expect that the King, that the Lords, that the House of Commons, that corrupt body, which is the proposed object of the Reform, will effect it for you? I once more, therefore, recommend to you a firm, decided, persevering, but yet pacific conduct. Peaceful means will be sufficient for your purpose; but zeal will be required, and a firm determination to honour with your approbation and confidence only those of your Representatives who, by a uniform, steady, and consistent conduct, shall manifest a warm attachment to your cause.

Mr. Fox then read the Petition, which was resolved upon unanimously.

Mr. Fox then said, I believe, Gentlemen, it will be proper to acquaint you, that there will be Petitions ready for signatures in different parts of the town.

MAJOR CARTWRIGHT moved for it to be presented by their two Representatives, Mr. Fox
and

and Sir Cecil Wray; which was agreed to unanimously.

Dr. JEBB.—The particular business for which this Meeting was called being now concluded, I beg leave to offer a few reflections upon a matter of the most serious and important nature.

Under a strong impression of the calamities derived upon us from an unjust and unnatural war, the inhabitants of this city lately presented a Petition to the King, “That he would relinquish *entirely*, and *for ever*, the plan of reducing our American brethren to obedience by force.” The changes that soon after took place in the Royal Councils and the Administration of this Country, led us to expect that the prayer of our Petition would be granted, and the calamitous contest terminate in peace.

An event very different from the fact.

It is your duty and your interest, my fellow-citizens, on whom must be levied the taxes necessary to the support of such a contest, taxes which our exhausted finances are utterly unable to sustain, to be on your guard, lest, under false pretences, you be induced to give your sanction to the continuance of a war which threatens the destruction of our Country. I presume not to speak of the measures of the cabinet, except so far as those measures are openly declared; I form my judgment solely from what the Members of Administration have declared in the House of Peers, or Assembly of the Commons; from hence, there

there is too much reason to apprehend that doubts and difficulties still remain with respect to the main object of our prayer. I will unfold my feelings without reserve. It is not without some reason supposed, that notwithstanding late appearances, there still exists in the presiding power of this country, an indisposition to accede to the unqualified independence of America: nor is it possible that the contrary can be ascertained, as long as the concession of this independence shall be connected with the ratification of a general treaty of peace.

In such circumstances a collateral point of dispute between this Country and any other of the Belligerent Powers, may be held forth as the ostensible ground and reason for protracting the war. Years may pass before this dispute shall be adjusted; other points of difference may arise, or artfully be suggested by the Minister of the day, and thus the recognition of independence be suspended until new delusions shall take place, the ravages of war be renewed, and our destruction be complete.

The immediate recognition of the unqualified independence of America will be our only security against the continuance of those evils we have already experienced, or the farther calamities we have so much reason to apprehend.— Such a measure will be just and honourable, such a measure also will be expedient; for in politics,

politics, as well as in the private concerns of life, justice and expediency are inseparably united.

When in consequence of the natural effect of such a measure, on the various parties in the war, peace shall be established, ancient habits of friendship and commercial intercourse will revive—the generosity of the Americans will be awakened by our voluntary acknowledgment of their independence—their affections will return. And were we even to suppose, that the terms of Peace held out by France and Spain, were such as it would not become us to submit to, the neutral Powers, whose interest it is not that England should descend too low in the political scale, having their envy or their jealousy fully gratified by the political separation of the two countries of America and England, would, in all probability, step forward in our support.

You, I trust, will therefore conclude, that your worthy Representative has, for just and sufficient motives, resigned the station he lately held in the Government of this country. Mr. Fox wished to acknowledge the independence of America in the most unconditional and unlimited terms, induced by a well-grounded conviction, that such recognition would not only be a measure just and honourable in itself, but also would be attended with the most signal advantages to this Country. For my own part, I feel no hesitation in declaring, that the acknowledged point of dispute between the Mem-

bers of the Cabinet was not, as was asserted in the Commons House of Parliament, a *trifling shade of difference*; but, on the contrary, I am persuaded it constituted in fact the ESSENTIAL difference between PEACE and WAR. I cannot therefore sufficiently honour your Representative for his wisdom, steadiness, and integrity, at this important moment, the most truly critical that England ever knew; from my heart I am persuaded, that he has evidenced himself to be an able Statesman, an excellent Citizen, and an honest Man.

Dr. JEBB then moved, that the thanks of this Meeting be given to the worthy Chairman, for his conduct on this day; which motion was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Fox then came forward again, and addressed himself to the Electors as follows:

Gentlemen,

I cannot receive the repeated testimonies of approbation which you have this day expressed towards me, without again wishing to repeat the sincere pleasure I feel from your kindness, and the gratitude with which it inspires me. I should, perhaps have said a few words earlier on the business alluded to by my worthy Friend, if it had not been intimated to me that there were persons here dissatisfied with my conduct in Parliament, dissatisfied with my conduct as a Minister, who intended to avail themselves of this occasion to express their disapprobation,
and

and publicly to state the causes and the reasons for it: always happy in giving those persons who think proper to condemn my conduct, an opportunity of the most public (the more public the better) and most open explanation of their sentiments, I was willing to hear what they should be disposed to suggest against me, that I might have a fuller and more complete means of justification; for I am thoroughly conscious that the more the charge against me is developed, the more ample and satisfactory will be my power of vindication. The worthy Gentleman who spoke last, to whom I have so many obligations, and upon whose first suggestion I was originally recommended to the City of Westminster, has alluded to a Petition which I had the honour to present to his Majesty, and which was signed by four thousand of the Inhabitants of that City; I had certainly hoped that that Petition, confirmed and strengthened as it was by the several others which originated in different quarters of the kingdom, would have ultimately produced all the effects they prayed for. So long as I continued in Administration, you all had a right to expect that the object of those Petitions would be carefully promoted, and that its principle would be inviolably adhered to. Had it been otherwise, you would have had just reason to accuse me of being an apostate to your cause, and a traitor to your interests. What will become of it now,

it is not for me directly to preface; but I hope, and most sincerely wish, your Petition will still find a gracious reception from Parliament, and the honest support of Ministers.

The worthy gentleman who preceded me, Dr. Jebb, who, if he has any faults in the world, they are the faults of too much candour, and a too unsuspecting honesty, informs you, that you have still the promises of Ministers for the grounds of expectation that your Petition will be attended to. He is willing to believe these promises. I am glad of it. I wish to shake no man's confidence: but I must be permitted to retain my own sentiments, my own opinions. I own I have suspicions. I have long entertained suspicions, as to the general political principles of your present Minister. When I became more immediately and thoroughly satisfied, that these suspicions were not badly founded, I esteemed it my duty to give a public indication of the state of my opinions, and to hold out the signal to the world, by retiring from his Majesty's service. Gentlemen, Dr. Jebb has mentioned the names of several persons from whom you have received promises upon the immediate object of your Petition, as well as other matters of political magnitude. As to the first person he named, I mean the Duke of Richmond, he cannot be more happy, he cannot be more proud, in giving every tribute of applause to him than I shall always be.

He

He and I may differ in opinion as to the fitness or expediency of the moment for retiring from his Majesty's Counsels, but we are unshakenly united in our general principles, and in our fixed sentiments of popular questions.—We can never long differ, because, though an accidental difference may have arisen, as to what line of conduct might be proper or improper at this moment, I repeat it again, there is not, nor cannot be, a difference of principle between that noble Duke and me.—I revere the noble Duke's principles; and am never more happy than when I enjoy a public opportunity of giving every testimony of my esteem and respect for him.—He is an honest man, an able man, and a persevering one; though, in my opinion, mistaken in his choice of conduct at the present period.—But there is this consolation for you and me, that the noble Duke is not a man that will sleep upon his post; and whenever he has the same reasons to suspect that I have, you may depend upon it he will not a moment continue a colleague of the present Administration. Another noble person has been mentioned, as having made great promises:—I am not much used to trust to that person's promises;—and for this reason, because past experience has supplied me with no cause for trusting him:—quite the contrary.—I attend to facts, not promises; and upon that criterion you will perhaps find little foundation for confidence in the noble

noble person alluded to. The noble Earl, I mean the Earl of Shelburne, has repeatedly told the world he would never join any Minister that would grant independence to America:—he has said, that in no circumstances would he be induced to accede to so humiliating a measure;—that Britain's fun was set for ever when that event should take place.—When the noble Earl used this language, it was doubtless his intention to pay a compliment, and it must be acknowledged he did not address his compliment ignorantly; he knew how and where to take his aim, and no doubt he has taken it effectually; now, however, that the noble Earl's object is in some measure attained; now, for mere political purposes, he recants the whole of his former doctrines, permanently and seriously established as they had been, and makes no scruple to assert, that the grounds of his former declarations are gone. that he has relinquished his opinion, and subscribes now to a sentiment which he had formerly professed the most utter abhorrence of, an abhorrence so firmly rooted, that no contingencies, no misfortunes, no humiliation, could induce him to overcome it. If an opinion so formed, and so avowed, could be relinquished in a moment, you have reason to expect that his other opinions will not prove more sincere nor more permanent. This is one grand, obvious reason for suspicion, backed, however, by a thousand others, which have
made

made an impression on my mind, but which however I am not entirely at liberty to make use of here; but Gentlemen, it is not by promises by which I am governed, by which this Assembly or the World in general will be governed. Let us look to performances, and what circumstance do you find not only amongst recent occurrences, but in the whole history of the noble Earl's political life, that can in the most remote degree tend to inspire a confidence, established upon that basis? During the last Administration, I will venture to say, you had something better to look to than promises; the Members, who now no longer form a part of it, not only promised, but performed; before they came into office, they engaged to bring in a Bill for diminishing the influence of the Crown: What they had engaged to do out of office, they performed in it—they engaged to bring in a Bill of Reform, and for the establishment of general economy—they did so;—they had patronized the Contractor's Bill, as tending to purify the popular Representation in Parliament—they brought it through all its stages, while in office, and made it a law;—and without any previous engagement, they did, what in my opinion is of as much, or more consequence than all the rest, they introduced the Bill for the exclusion of Excise Officers, &c. from the right of voting, which struck more radically and effectually at the corrupt influence

of the Crown than any other measure whatever. Not a day passed, but some effort was made to contribute to the grand objects of Parliamentary Purification and general Reform; and the sole use they made of the honour of serving his Majesty was, to prove, by actual performances, that they had not betrayed the confidence of the People, by vague, hollow promises, which they had no intention to adhere to. I must request you, therefore, to look to performances, and to them only.—I cannot desire you, it would not be fair, to compare the *performances* of the late Administration, with the *promises* of the present; but I do most anxiously desire you to compare the performances of the last with the performances of the present.—I shall desire no better comparison—no fuller proof of the difference between us. I must beg you, in the mean time, not to be so far misled by sounding words, as to compare the actual works of one set of men with the mere verbal engagements of another. To perform, requires, perhaps, more steadiness, more consistency, more sincerity, than belongs to some men. To promise is easy; requires no resolution, no ability, no integrity. But if I am required to be influenced by a man's declarations, it becomes me to look at his character upon the whole, to examine his declarations in the whole: I must set his promises together, and ask myself, what ought to be the general result? It was reported in the news-

news-papers, and I have received a farther confirmation of it, through the medium of private friends, that the Earl of Shelburne, in his place in the House of Lords, promised to promote a Parliamentary Reform; at the same time, however, that he makes this profession, he intimated a design of restoring the obsolete and dangerous practice of giving the Royal Negative to Bills, which have received the consent of the two other parts of the Legislature. What is this saying, in effect? why simply this; “so long as the Parliament is what it is; so long as it is corrupt enough to follow my dictates,” (provided the noble Earl should find it so; but from some indications of honesty which the present Parliament have given, I deem that to be doubtful) “so long as they echo my sentiments, that is, the sentiments of the Minister, so long I will by no means advise his Majesty to exercise his negative. When the House of Commons acquiesce implicitly in the wishes of the King, his Majesty shall not interpose his prerogative against them; but as soon as they shall be made an honest, independent House of Commons; when, by the Reform that our late colleagues have compelled us to adopt, the Parliamentary Representation shall be rendered equal, general, and virtuous, then it will be time for me to revive the custom of his Majesty’s negative; then it will be proper to check the opinions of such a Parliament, and to devise an expedient by which

“ which their honest and constitutional powers
 “ shall be rendered nugatory and ineffectual.
 “ The time approaches when the House of Com-
 “ mons will become, in fact, the Representation
 “ of the People, and when their language will
 “ be the genuine voice of the People; but as
 “ such an event must necessarily prove of all
 “ others the most unfortunate and hostile to
 “ my Administration, I will hit upon a mea-
 “ sure, by which the inconvenient virtue of
 “ such a Representation may be made impotent
 “ and dangerless, and by which I may preserve
 “ my favourite maxim of arbitrary prerogative,
 “ at the same time that I cajole the multitude
 “ by a specious concession to their wishes, and
 “ an empty compliance, which can neither be-
 “ nefit them nor injure me.” Such are the
 gracious intentions of the present Minister—
 such the means by which he expects to establish
 his popularity. But what honest man can be
 influenced by such professions—professions so
 repugnant, so evidently hollow, and mutually
 contradictory?—I have another criterion by
 which I judge of a man’s sincerity in any spe-
 cific instance; and that is, by considering his
 veracity in other cases: now the Earl of Shel-
 burne has affirmed in Parliament, that he knew
 no other reason for my resignation but his ap-
 pointment to the first seat at the Treasury; I
 give you my word of honour, and pledge every
 thing that is dear to me upon the assertion, that
 there

there were other reasons for my resignation, and that those reasons were known to the Earl of Shelburne. Happily for me, however, this does not rest upon my single testimony: it rests upon the evidence of the Duke of Richmond; it rests upon the evidence of Lord Keppel, upon the evidence of General Conway, upon the evidence of that most upright and respected character, Lord John Cavendish, and upon the evidence of several other Members of his Majesty's Cabinet, who have given the most conclusive testimony to the same purport by their silence. The fact is, that the day before the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, I did, in the most solemn, direct manner, declare my intention of resignation in the Cabinet, notwithstanding that the health of the Marquis of Rockingham was at that time understood to afford more flattering expectation than it had done some days preceding. That being the case, therefore, I am compelled to entertain some suspicions of the noble Earl's veracity. But what does the noble Earl himself say upon this subject, when he was called upon for an explanation on a subsequent day? Unfortunately there was a thin House, but the fact is sufficiently attested, so as to preclude the possibility of a doubt upon it. He said, that he had not only heard me intimate something like an intention to resign on the day preceding Lord Rockingham's death, but *that he had often, on other days, heard me express*
the

the same inclination. He had said, that he knew no reason in God's earth for my retiring from his Majesty's service, but that of his own appointment to the Treasury; and yet, when he comes to his justification, he acknowledges that he and I had frequently differed in the Cabinet; not upon one or two points, but *frequently*; and that in consequence of this difference, I had *often* expressed my purpose of resignation. When I find a man disagree so entirely with himself, I must doubt; I cannot help it; I cannot place an implicit confidence in his assertions, nor rely upon any of his promises. The noble Earl declared publicly, that a pension, which had been granted to one of his friends, a great and enormous pension, was originally thought of at the suggestion of the Marquis of Rockingham, and was, in fact, granted by him. He has himself since acknowledged, that this is *not true*, he has confessed that the pension in question originated in himself, as it naturally must, the object of the pension being his particular friend. I do not wish to load this part of the subject, but I must mention cursorily, that every pension which has been granted since the last change but one of Administration, has been given to accommodate the friends of the present Minister; there has not been one shilling laid upon the public in any shape or form whatever, for the service of any of the Members of the late Administration. Lord Shelburne's friends
and

and connections have been the sole and exclusive objects of all the pecuniary grants whatever, that have taken place in the interval alluded to. I do not say that some of these pensions have not been given to very respectable and considerable men.—I am most sincerely of opinion that some of them were most justifiably bestowed; but I am bound at the same time to affirm, that they were *all* given at *his* desire to his particular friends.—I know but of three, and I could prove my assertion by a specific mention of the individuals, if that were necessary.—Notwithstanding this, I myself heard the noble Earl, in one speech in the House of Peers, and it has been, I believe, pretty correctly stated to me by friends, that he used similar language in another on a subsequent day, not directly affirm, that is not his way, but strongly insinuate, that these pensions were not only bestowed at the suggestion of the Marquis of Rockingham, but that they were the conditions of some contemptible compromises which never were heard of before, nor ever had an existence but in the noble Earl's fancy. I have still another reason for doubting his promises:—I heard him repeatedly declare in Parliament, when the nature of his situation seemed to call for some exposition of his sentiments, as to the important object of Reform, “*that he would endeavour to support the system of Reform upon fair considerations, provided the opinion of mankind should appear to*”

“ 39

“*go with them*.”—He did not express a direct approbation of the system;—he does not like explicit avowals of his sentiments,—he only promised a kind of conditional support, *provided the opinions of mankind appeared to go with them*. Why, he could not say less, no man could have said less—If the general opinions of the public went that way, he was obliged to acquiesce; this does not amount to a specific declaration of his own designs or wishes—he has not in any speech I have ever seen or heard of expressed any such direct opinion, but hasfoothed the ear of the public with a general equivocal insinuation upon this great point, without any meaning at all. Not so the Duke of Richmond—he has made an explicit positive declaration upon the subject, which if he does not adhere to, I shall be more surprised than ever I was at any thing in the world, and more shaken in my opinions of mankind than ever I was in my life. There does not exist a man of more steady principles, nor more sacredly observant of his promises, than the Duke of Richmond; no man forms a better opinion, and there lives not an individual who more faithfully adheres to all his engagements—There is one danger, Gentlemen, against which I must take the liberty to warn you, and which appears so much the more formidable to me as coming under a very specious shape indeed. You are told that if you once get a proper Parliamentary Representation,
you

you have got all you have to wish for; this, Gentlemen, is not true, you are deceived when you are told so. It is most undoubted, that when you have got a proper Parliamentary Representation, you have got a good mean and an excellent instrument, but it is still necessary that you should attend to the use of that instrument, and watch vigilantly that it be placed in proper hands. In all monarchies, and perhaps in mixed monarchies particularly, the Executive Power ought to be carefully observed, and the utmost diligence exerted, that the immediate Power which governs you is not only capable from talents, but proper from integrity and firmness, to exercise such an employment. Gentlemen, no equality of Representation, no alteration in the duration of Parliament, no Constitution upon paper or practice of any kind whatever, can preserve the just and natural consequence of this country, if the Executive Government is not lodged with able and honest hands. I wish you to have a true, general, constitutional Parliament, not that when you have got it, you may go to sleep and repose yourselves, as if in entire security—not that you should be careless or inattentive to the Government of your country; but for quite contrary purposes; that when you have got the just and powerful instrument in your hands of a pure and honest Parliament, you may make use of it for constitutional purposes; for watching over the Executive as well
as

as the Legislative Government of your country, so as that your interest abroad, and safety at home, be secured upon the surest of all foundations, the vigilance of the People displayed thro' a constitutional medium. All the misfortunes which have befallen this country, have originated principally in the want of due and general attention to this principle. The system has been to divide men against men, to separate the force of each of them, and to subvert the foundations of reciprocal confidence.

These are the practices which have existed! that they may not be revived, I wish and imprecate; I may be mistaken, but when I see the same standard reared again, under the banners of which so many calamitous consequences have arisen to this country, I thought it my duty to light the beacon to my Constituents, by quitting a situation which I liked personally, which was advantageous to me, and as convenient to my circumstances as flattering to that vanity which perhaps inheres more or less in all men, but which I felt in my conscience I could not keep without becoming an accomplice in the delusion which I saw preparing against my fellow-subjects. If I have foreseen these first symptoms of danger sooner than other people, it is not because I possess more penetration than my neighbours, but because I have been placed in circumstances better calculated for supplying me with information upon these subjects; because I have had a nearer

nearer inspection, and am in possession of more facts, with a truer key to their fair and proper construction, than other individuals have had. *All I wish of you is this, if you should find no presages justified by the event, then I hope you will do justice to the sincerity of my feelings,* and the veracity of my assertions: if they are not confirmed by the event, I shall submit myself contentedly to your severity, and acknowledge myself the wretch which your authorised indignation will doubtless paint me.

I have been accused of betraying Cabinet secrets. Do the persons who advance this absurd and groundless charge, recollect that not one syllable has fallen from me upon any occasion, that in any respect affects the State, or the secrets of the Cabinet, but which has transpired in other situations, and has been mentioned by the Duke of Richmond, Lord Keppel, Lord John Cavendish, General Conway, and the Earl of Shelburne. Do the advocates for this noble Earl condemn me for the very conduct which they excuse or approve in him? or do they esteem it an advantage in him to participate, even in the guilt of some men? There are but awkward compliments, if they are intended as such; but the fact is, the whole charge is absurd and trifling; and in this instance, therefore, I shall do more justice to the character of the noble Earl than his immediate partizans have done

VOL. II M by

by their silly patronage of so ill-founded an accusation.

Gentlemen, Dr. Jebb, has expressed his opinion to you, with respect to the independence of America, in a very clear and demonstrative manner. I entirely concur with that worthy Gentleman on this subject, and most sincerely think that the independence of America, is not only a measure absolutely necessary for the political salvation of this country, but in itself considered in the abstract, a just, wise, and equitable measure. Some people represent this opinion as a humiliating, abject opinion. I think quite the contrary; that which contributes to the preservation of a State, already at the verge of ruin, cannot, in a political view, be mean;—that, which restores freedom to a brave and generous People, cannot, in any view, be abject. Without a complete, unconditional acknowledgment of American independence, this Country can have no safety; and why, therefore, should we destroy the effect of a necessary measure by an ungracious mode of performing it. They are Englishmen,—they have English habits,—English feelings;—let us do with them as we did with Ireland, and I doubt not the same effects will follow. Had we bargained with the People of Ireland, instead of granting them liberally what they had an honest right to, I am convinced we should not at this time have had that country for our friend; they asked for rights,—we said
in

in reply, take them, they are your's—nature gave you them—we hang no conditions about the neck of Justice—we trust to your generosity, and rely upon your affection. What was the consequence?—they felt the manly sincerity of this conduct as they ought;—that brave and loyal People, attached to this country from common habits and common feelings, and stimulated by the generous mode of giving them what they were perhaps before in possession of, immediately set about giving some substantial indications of their gratitude, and agreed to furnish this country with its best assistance, a large number of seamen. If affairs should proceed in Ireland, as they have hitherto done, I maintain that that vote in Parliament, which granted to the Irish their just rights, and acknowledged their independence, was one of the most advantageous votes ever passed in the British Senate, and was a vote for an immediate supply of ten sail of the line—A generous, enlightened People, formed, as I said before, with English principles, and actuated by English prejudices, were sure to act like Englishmen when they were treated with generosity and kindness. If you had stipulated and bargained with them—if you had put the possession of their natural privileges upon contingencies, upon conditions, I firmly believe, this supply of seamen would never have been obtained, and Ireland would have remained at this day, not as a part of the strength, but of

the weakness of this country. This is the plan of broad, just, liberal politics, that I always wish to see observed through every part of the British Empire : this is the way to treat with Englishmen—to conciliate their affections, and to dispose them to peace ; they abhor bargaining when liberty is the object of the stipulation ; they will not resign the ninth part of a hair in a bargain, but will give *themselves*, if treated with candour, fairness, and sincerity. If this conduct proved so efficacious in Ireland, why should we not hope it would prove equally powerful in America ? The Americans have the same principles, the same passions, the same constitution, the same nature ; and I have no doubt, if his Majesty's Ministers should think proper to adopt my sentiments, now that I am out of office, a solid, permanent, and advantageous Treaty may still be formed with that country : but then it must have justice in its principle, and liberality in the tenor of its formation. I wish, with all possible sincerity, that they may pursue this plan—if they do not, I fear peace is very remote indeed. What will then be our situation?—an indisposition for peace, at least for the only principle upon which peace can be had, and an inability for war. Our resources are certainly much diminished ; and if they were to be employed against our brethren in America, I am not certain that I should rejoice much
in

in perceiving the means of such a bloodshed much multiplied.

The noble Earl at the head of the Treasury has said, that if the independence of America should be granted during the existence of his Administration, and he professed himself of opinion that it should, the splendor of this Country would be gone, its Sun would be set, and his Government would take place in the *twilight* of the Empire. I shall not comment upon the reluctance which this style of speaking implies in the noble Earl, as to this great and necessary object; but cannot help observing, that the noble Earl's terms appear to me the best and most apposite to his situation that were ever used on any occasion.—He was aware that his Administration was not calculated for the light of day; he feared that something between light and darkness would be wanted in it—An involuntary consciousness convinced him, that a glimmering half-light was full as much as his Government could wisely be exposed to—that it would, notwithstanding, be as much illumined by the *light* of promise as *darkened* by the gloom of distress; and, therefore, that it would literally be an Administration between light and darkness, or, as his Lordship emphatically called it, a political twilight.

Gentlemen, I have nothing farther to say, than to thank you once more for the constant and unremitting testimonies which you have

given me of your entire approbation of my conduct. I have had the honour of serving his Majesty three months—a short period—but yet, perhaps, long enough to operate as a trial of my integrity: if, during that interval, you know of any instance wherein I have forsaken my old principles—wherein I have held one language out of office, and another in it, with respect either to persons or things, then think me a double man, and despise me. If, on the contrary, you find my conduct has been marked by an indefatigable exertion to do every thing in my power for the interest of this Country in general, and yours in particular; if you should find, upon the closest scrutiny, that this has been the sole and anxious aim of my short ministerial existence, I shall then hope, that whatever may be your opinion of my abilities, you will at least give credit to my intentions, and subscribe to my sincerity.

Gentlemen, I am obliged to trouble you with one word farther on a subject that had escaped me, and that is, respecting my very worthy colleague, Sir Cecil Wray. I have had the honour of a letter from him, wherein he requests me to take this opportunity of assuring you, that he entirely, and in the strongest manner, approves of every part of my conduct; and that his opinions, with respect to America in particular, exactly accord with my own, as I flatter myself your's do also. He farther assures me, that his
 opinions

opinions upon that subject are so firmly established that they must continue to be his sentiments through life.

Gentlemen, you have not had a long opportunity of experiencing the integrity and ability of my worthy Colleague;—but you will permit me to say, who know him, that the longer he continues your Member, the more will he approve himself an upright, able, independent Senator, and an honest Man.

Paper III.

*Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County
of Nottingham, on the 28th day of October, 1782.*

AT a Meeting of the County of Nottingham,
held at the Moot Hall, in Mansfield, on
Monday the 28th of October, by call of
the High Sheriff.

The Right Hon. Lord GEORGE SUTTON, in
the Chair.

The following Petition was unanimously agreed to:

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain,
in Parliament assembled,*

The Humble Petition of the Nobility, Gentle-
men, Clergy, and Freeholders of the Coun-
ty of Nottingham,

Sheweth,

THAT from whatever causes the inadequate
and disproportionate representation of the Com-
mons of this realm may have arisen, it is an
evil of a very high magnitude, which has not
been less injurious to the past, than it is danger-
ous

ous to the future interests of our country, and which we trust it will not be thought unworthy the wisdom and virtue of this Honourable House to reform.

To this wisdom and virtue we respectfully confide the reform; but it is our earnest Petition that no delay may be admitted in taking this grievance into the serious consideration of this House; at the same time we submit to the judgment of this Honourable House, the present state of the duration of Parliament, trusting that this Honourable House will provide such a redress as may diffuse a general satisfaction, restore the purity of this Honourable House as the true Representative of the People, and do away every suspicion which weakens their confidence in the united Legislature of the Nation.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Resolved, That when this Petition has been circulated in the County, in order that it may receive the signatures of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, it be presented to the House of Commons, either by the Members of the County, or by one of the Members of Parliament present at this Meeting, or by Frederick Montagu, Esq.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Lord George Sutton, for his ready acceptance of the Chair, and his attention to the business of this day.

Resolved,

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Honourable Viscount Gallway, not merely for his concurrence with the Petitioners, but particularly for the generous example of yielding his personal interests to the views of this Petition.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Honourable the Earl of Surrey, to Sir George Savile, and to the other Members of the House of Commons, who have honoured this Meeting with their presence, and so powerfully enforced the justice and wisdom of the Petition.

Resolved, That this Meeting be adjourned subject to the call of the Chairman.

Resolved, That the Proceedings of this Meeting be published under the signature of the Chairman.

GEORGE SUTTON, Chairman.

Paper IV.

Summary Account of the Debate at a General Meeting of the County of Nottingham, on the 28th day of October, 1782.

THE Company assembled at the Moot Hall, Mansfield, about twelve o'clock, pursuant to the advertisement of the High Sheriff. The business commenced with a motion of John Gilbert Cooper, Esq; inviting the Right Hon. Lord George Sutton to the Chair, as the High Sheriff had not thought fit to give his personal attendance. This motion seconded by Launcelot Rolleston, Esq; was unanimously approved, and his Lordship took the Chair: from which he informed the company that they were called together to determine upon the propriety of presenting a Petition to Parliament, to take into consideration the defects of the present Representation of the Commons, at the same time to recommend to their attention the duration of Parliament.

Lord Viscount GALLWAY then addressed the Meeting, observing that the advertisement of the High Sheriff determined immediately his attendance

ance, as he thought it the duty of every gentleman to be present at a Public Meeting, properly summoned, that he might in a manly way give his assent or dissent to the subjects of their deliberation. That he had come to Mansfield, ignorant of what might be the specific Propositions of those gentlemen who had signed the Requisition, but decided as to his own conduct, that if the Propositions should not meet his ideas of propriety, he should publicly testify his disapprobation; as it was his opinion, that a silent acquiescence in the measures of a County Meeting, implied the approbation of those who had not opposed it. He was happy however in assuring the Meeting, that the objects of the Petition which would be proposed to them, had his entire and cordial approbation. It was conveyed in terms of decency and moderation, it was clear and precise, and it expressed a proper respect to those whom it was addressed to. It was on a subject of high importance, and which perhaps hardly needed discussion to meet the approbation of the whole Assembly. It was no party business, he was himself no party man, nor any way connected with any body of public men. He acted from his own views of public measures, and by those should his conduct ever be directed. He was sensible that the House of Commons was not such a Representation of the People as it ought to be, and though his own interests might be much affected by the Reform
which

which was in view, yet would he not suffer private motives to stand in the way of what was essential to the Constitution, and necessary to the safety of the whole. He wished the People of this Country to have what was their undoubted right, a pure representation, unmixed with other influence. It behoved Parliament to attend to this right, and therefore the prayer of the Petition was reasonable, and must approve itself to all.

His Lordship then read the Petition.

Mr. DICKENSON RASTALL being then called on by the Chairman, said, that not doubting but so good a cause would have been supported by a multitude of abler advocates, he was rather unprepared; but however that his sentiments, such as they were, he would trust to the indulgence of the Meeting, in the language of plain sincerity. He then commented on the success of their former Petitions, which, notwithstanding the prognostications of some, and the apprehensions of others, had been the occasion of no violence or commotions, but had merely driven from the Administration of the kingdom a Minister grown old in political sin, and strengthened by experience in the science of corruption. He said they did not wish to alter the Constitution; they only wanted to bring it back to what it was before. Influence was a science, and Parliamentary suffrages a merchandize. He ob-
served

served that for the sake of unanimity, they had confined their Petition to one object, but that his wishes went to others, particularly the duration of Parliaments, and the custom of granting private benevolences to the Crown before the sanction of Parliament had been obtained, which might soon raise it above the assistance of the Commons. After stating the grievances of the nation, and concluding in the words of a noble author, that if they were not redressed, the time would soon be at hand "when Britain must perish with her degenerate sons," he proceeded to obviate the objections which had been made to the petitioners. He said that at first they were taxed with such democratical notions, as nothing but ill humour could suggest, and nothing but absurdity itself believe. That now the cry was they were a party, that by a party the closet had been stormed, and that they wanted to rule the kingdom by party. What was party? they knew what it was to have an Administration without Party, it was to lose one half of the empire and to disgust the other; it was to raise jealousies between the King and his People, and a thousand other evils. Party, he said, he understood to be concert in council, unanimity of professions, identity of object and concurrence in operation.

Mr. Haywood then addressed the Chairman, said, that such was the obvious necessity of a Reform in the Constitution of the House of Commons,

Commons, that it needed not much ingenuity to produce arguments in favour of any measure which might lead to so desirable an end. 'He asked, to what our present degraded state as a nation was owing, but to the unwise and criminal conduct of Parliament. To this must be referred the commencement and the obstinate prosecution of a war, which had been productive only of calamity and disgrace, an issue which could not have been experienced if the collective wisdom and virtue of a free People had entered into the Legislation. This was proved from fact; for who were the constant supporters of our mad politics, but the Members for decayed Boroughs, the Representatives of a mere handful of Electors, who generally had no choice at all, while the wisdom and virtue of Opposition had been found in the County Members and the Representatives of large and populous Towns, where a free choice could alone be expected.' And if this free choice prevailed in any considerable degree, would it ever be that men would be sent to Parliament, to take care of the national interests, who were marked for indifference to every interest but their own; that young men would be sent to Parliament, in which they were to learn to be wise, not to impart and communicate wisdom, already acquired? that any would be sent to Parliament merely to partake of the privileges which it affords its Members? and yet one
or

of all of these constitute the views of many who have obtained Seats in that House. He concluded with recommending it as the duty of every one to aim at that regulation which the source of our misfortunes pointed out to them. We might then hope that our National Councils would be distinguished by wisdom and disinterestedness, instead of folly and selfishness.

At this period Sir G. SAVILE being respectfully desired to communicate his sentiments, he readily complied, but observed, that it was almost unnecessary, his decided opinion of the Representation of this kingdom being he presumed so well known, as to leave no one ignorant of it. Indeed it was to him a question so plain, so self-evident, as in the very stating of it to the mind, carried conviction with it: if Representation had any meaning, the present state of Parliament, as the Representative of the Commons, was an absurdity, a contradiction to the very terms; it was not representation, it was mis-representation. There could not be thought be two opinions upon the subject. And as it was absurd and contradictory, so it had been full of mischief, or as the Petition had happily stated it, it had been as injurious to the past as it was dangerous to the future interests of the People. In very strong, in very pathetic terms, which the Compiler of this account cannot do justice to, he deplored the ruined, humiliated state, to which this radical defect in the Representative

representative Body had reduced the kingdom. Perhaps the warmth of a truly patriot mind, the indignancy of a generous spirit, led him to speak too severely of the consequences. The present endeavours of the People to stay the progress of the ruin were, he feared, to use a trite phrase, like fastening the door when the thief was stolen, or as if a physician should order an alterative, when his patient was dying of an apoplexy. As no hope however could originate from any other source than the Reform in view, he could entertain no ideas of a different opinion; but he was glad that the two objects of the Petition, viz. The reforming the Representation, and shortening the duration of Parliament, were separated from each other, and did not stand in the very contemplation of the Petitioners on the same ground. The necessity of a Reform in both did not even to himself appear equally clear, and though to both he could conscientiously subscribe, yet many who were sanguine friends to the first measure, had more than doubts with respect to the latter, and might have been repelled from signing the Petition altogether, if the Petition had been so framed, as to require an equal assent to both. The one therefore, to which no man could frame a decent objection, was the body and soul of the Petition, it was the subject of clear, unambiguous, decided request; the other with whatever doubts and differences of opinion were

VOL. II. N annexed

annexed to it, was submitted to the sober deliberation and judgment of Parliament.

Mr. WALKER next claimed the attention of the Meeting, but in a different view of the subject. He wished rather to obviate objections than to add any thing to the unanswerable arguments by which the propriety and utility of the Petition had been enforced. Many specious objections had been and would be urged, to divert the minds of the People from the salutary object of their Petition, that it was a novelty, a moulding the Constitution anew; that if wise and right in itself, it did not meet the present temper of the kingdom, and being merely the speculation of a few, would only divide the nation in a moment which of all others asked the united aid of every heart and hand, and that it would unnerve the Executive Power, by weakening the dependance of Administration upon the Commons, from whom the supplies of Government were to be received.—To each of these objections he proposed to answer in their order:

The first, viz. that the object of the People's prayer was an absolute innovation, appeared to be a formidable objection; but he trusted that a little attention to the origin and progress of our singular Constitution would shew the objection to be wholly unfounded, that the evil complained of in the Petition was itself the thing abhorrent and strange to the ideas of Englishmen, and that the Redress petitioned for was
 simply

simply a renovation. If this could be clearly shewn, it could not fail to reconcile the minds of every one as to their old habitude and right. But as this was a matter of historic evidence, he presumed that he should not affront his audience in giving them a brief abstract of the rise, progress, and discriminating spirit of the English Constitution, as no unnecessary information to many whose situation in life might render so useful a knowledge inaccessible to them. He asserted that the actuating principle and virtue of the English Constitution, was derived from, and founded upon, the primæval rights of human nature, upon the sense, conviction, and invariable exercise of these rights with our early ancestors, to which their being secreted for ages from the knowledge of the dangerous refinements of more polished European nations had principally contributed.

That passing from the East along the tract of Northern Europe, and uncontaminated with the servile maxims of Aristocratic and Monarchical Government, to which the Southern Regions had long been habituated, they had descended into the rich Provinces of the Roman Empire, and imported with them wherever they established themselves, the liberal spirit by which society had till that moment been conducted amongst them. This spirit consisted in the equality of all, equality of rights, and that in

this view, every Member of Community stood upon the same ground. Whatever distinctions particular exigencies might require, they were distinctions of utility, artificial arrangements for a common good, often abolished when the exigence ceased, but never subversive of the primary, the fundamental right to property, to liberty, to legislation, to life in all. Kings were originally but the leaders of their military expeditions, and Barons, subordinate Chieftains under them, instituted to serve the purposes of the State, dependent for their very existence and authority upon the will of the State, controulable by, and accountable to the State, and which the necessities of the State in its lengthened struggle for dominion with the natives of the Roman Provinces, rendered permanent establishments. The State consisted originally in the Assembly of the whole Community, in whom resided the Supreme Power, and in which was combined, the military, the legislative, and often the judicial and executive character. But when the resistance of the natives was utterly subdued, and they were reduced to the condition of villainage or slavery, the necessity of convening the whole community in their military character no longer existed, and the inconvenience of General Assemblies rendered it expedient to provide some other mode of discharging the Legislative duties of
the

the State. To the greater Chieftains or Barons, a personal attendance was rather an honour than an inconvenience, while the lesser Barons, who with the greater were all originally peers, Peers or equals, were permitted to appear in the great Assemblies of the nation by their Representatives or Proxies. In the collective Assemblies of the whole Community is seen the origin of Parliament at all, in the latter institution, the first distinction of two orders in Parliament, viz. the greater Barons or Lords, who sat in person, and the Representatives of the lesser Barons, who are now the Knights or the Representatives of Counties. In this character Parliament continued for many years, till the contests between the greater Barons and the Monarch, and the advantages of commerce to both, introduced a further change, a new species of Representatives in the great Parliament of the nation. The frequent necessities of the Monarch invited him to emancipate the villains or slaves on his own Royal domain, by incorporating them with certain privileges, to erect them into the character of freemen; from this institution the Monarch derived their personal service in his wars, and pecuniary aids from that wealth which their privileges and the exercise of commerce soon acquired to them. This example so advantageous to the Monarch, was followed by the Barons, and Corporations increased through the whole kingdom. The convenience of receiving from

them grants of money procured their summons to Parliament by their Representatives; the increasing number, wealth and power of this new order of freemen, taught them their own consequence, and the necessities of the state gained them a full admission to all the Rights of Legislation in Parliament, and set them upon a level with the Representatives of the Counties. Thus was perfected the form of the English Parliament, when to the Representatives of the Counties were added those of the Boroughs or incorporated Towns, at present stiled the Citizens and Burgesses. The liberal spirit of Christianity cooperated with the utility of the State, and silently did away the very idea of a villain or slave.— Thus whatever entered into the first idea of a freeman, whatever was of the essence of his rights in the first Constitution of the invading nation, was extended to every freeman, and of these rights, that of Legislation either in Person or by their Representative, was a primary and fundamental one. The neighbouring nations had originally the same Constitution, the principles from which the form of English Government had its source, but not availing themselves of the same circumstances, they acquired not the same enlargement, the same security in the Representation of the Commons at large against the encroachments of Power; and they have fallen as we behold them, from a state of the highest freedom, into an abject dependance on
despotic

despotic Monarchs: An awful example to these kingdoms, to our Nobles, with all their fancied dignity and power, as it is not in human nature to provide a solid bulwark against the continually operating advantages of a Crown, unless in the spirit, the freedom, the equal Rights of the People. But what he wished his audience to collect from the whole review, was this single, this great principle, that Legislation either in Person or by Representation, is the equal, the common right of all, that it is inherent in the very idea of an English freeman, that it was imported into this island with our early ancestors, that the grant which embraced fellow-men as freemen, communicated this right, and that as all are now free it is communicated to all. The inequalities in this common right which have taken place, and which the Petition aims to redress, have been created by inattention, by accident, by abuse, but do not issue from the spirit or regular usage of the Constitution, and have greatly risen to their present dangerous height, against the very intention of the Constitution, from those changes which could not possibly have been foreseen. It was the convenience of the Monarch which first erected slaves into Corporations of Freemen, and summoned them to Parliament. Hence arose to the crown that dangerous prerogative, which was too long permitted, of summoning Representatives to Parliament from whatever place it pleased. This

was one source of unequal Representation, which the wisdom of Parliament has indeed guarded against in future, but too late to prevent the evil consequences. When it intercepted the further exercise of this Prerogative of the Crown, it ought to have rectified the abuses which the Prerogative had already established. Similar inequalities have taken place from the creating of Corporations by the Barons on their separate estates, which through their influence obtaining a summons to Parliament, the absolute property of these Boroughs has been conveyed with the estates to their successors. Another and perhaps the most fruitful source, has been in the changes and Revolutions which the lapse of time has produced. Great and populous towns have vanished as it were from the face of the land, and have hardly any existence but upon paper, yet the right of Representation continues, though the very cause and reason of Representation has ceased. While the very same time and fluctuations of commerce, have created many more towns of the first rank and consequence in the kingdom, to which no Representation has been extended. Thus in whatever view we contemplate the spirit and design of our Constitution, we see clearly that the prayer of the Petition has nothing of innovation, nothing strange in it, nothing but what the very idea of Parliament embraces and intends, nothing but what is essential to, and inherent in, the Rights of Free-
men,

men, and that the greatest abuses in the Representation are contrary to the very design of our ancestors themselves, unwise and improvident in many instances as these ancestors have been. It has ever been deemed an excellence in our Constitution, that there was resident in it the power and virtue of recurring to its original principles, whenever it shall be found to have dangerously degenerated from them; and if a Government mean well, it would be absolute suicide in it not to rectify abuses, which mere accident, time, or corruption have introduced, and which if not redressed, threaten to destroy all its character, and all its well being.

Having removed the imputation of novelty in the redress which the Petition prays for, Mr. Walker next adverted to the second objection, that however wise and right in itself, it did not meet the present temper of the kingdom, but would only disturb, divide and distract the nation, in a moment which required all its union. But let these men, whoever or of whatever rank they be, withdraw each their individual opposition, and the objection falls to the ground. Allowing the right, the wisdom, and utility of the Petition; they themselves should not swell the number of its opponents, an objection confessed to be founded in mere obstinacy and perverseness, in a refusal of public good, should not lie at their door: every fellow subject who will not accord with the Petition, should

should meet the friends of it on the ground of Constitutional Right, of national utility, and when all manly and virtuous reply fails them, it is a crime of the highest form not to be a friend, not to take a decided part in the cause of truth and right. It is not a rash and passionate censure to affirm, that with a silent acquiescence in the right and utility of the Petition, no good motive is at the bottom of that mind, which still continues to object to it, and throws any difficulty in the way of its success. The question between the friends and the enemies of the Petition is reduced to a short issue. Its friends plead the justice, the wisdom, the expedience of the measure, the horrid experience of past mischiefs, the well-founded apprehension of growing evil from the same malignant source. Let the enemies of the Petition stand forth in the face of their country, and shew that it is not just, not wise, not expedient; that the abuses complained of have not been disgraceful and ruinous, and have not an ugly aspect on the future; let them shew this, or continuing in a silent and sullen opposition, let them abide the consequence; the imputation of having renounced in this instance all the obligations of a citizen, of a well wisher to the public good. It is with men of this complexion, that the true difficulty rests, they are the authors of the opposition, with them lies all the crime of dis-union; but whether timidity, a spirit of no English hue,

or views which are not fit to be owned, create and support their disaffection, it becomes them to know that an Englishman cannot respect an opposition so founded; that the timid, the illiberal, and the selfish, are the enemies whom he expects to meet with in the field of all his virtuous contests.

But it is lastly urged, that the Reform, if it should be adopted, will unnerve the Executive Power, by undoing that influence, that ascendancy of Administration over the House of Commons, which is pleaded to be necessary to Government. But if the plea fail, the Reform ought not to be resisted on this ground. This is the last refuge of the enemies to a Parliamentary Reform, and in the supposed strength of which I verily believe many are really deceived. But a definition of terms, particularly of the Government, to which such an unconstitutional influence is necessary, may contribute to undeceive them. It is undoubtedly necessary to a Government which respects not the popular opinion, but this is not, or ought not to be, the Government of England; and if it be, is the very strongest reason, why an influence of so cursed a nature should be utterly extirpated. Some ambiguous and covert phrases require to be turned into plain English, in order clearly to understand them. In plain English then, a decided majority of the Minister in the House
means,

means, that it should be the Minister's house, not the House of Commons of England, and whether this be an honest, virtuous and salutary English maxim, I think may be left to the effrontery of your boldest enemy to say. What! a majority, prepared, disposed to carry through the Minister's measures; sworn, bound, and passive to his will, without regard, to the good pleasure of the People, by whom, and for whom they are or ought to be! No! the Constitution means the Minister no such majority, it abhors it, and no utility of a wise and virtuous Government requires it. No majority in the very idea of that house is intended, but what the wisdom, honesty, and patriotism of the Minister's conduct deserves and ever will procure to him. Let a Minister stand forth, and answer for this to Parliament and to the People, and every one may answer with his life for a triumphant majority, without the intervention of troublesome, illiberal, and dirty intrigues. Let any one for a moment conceive a Parliament in factious Opposition to such a Minister, and Almighty as it may presume itself to be, he will soon perceive that there is an Almighty Power which will controul and convert it to the public good.— Standing in the midway between the Crown and the People, and disowned, unsupported by either, Parliament would feel the awe of that Constitutional Spirit, which is the secret stay and security on which the fabric of our Government rests,

rests, which has and I trust will save it in the most perilous encounters. This is not idle theory, it was verified by the conduct of the greatest and honestest Minister that England ever knew. Called to the helm by the dangers, and necessities of the State, he had no interest at Court or in Parliament, but with a virtuous magnanimity he courted neither, he left it to his conduct to justify himself to both. The honest spirit of his Prince relaxed from its prejudices, but Parliament turned out of its habit and course never was cordial to him, yet it dared not to check him in his career of glory and of usefulness. This saved the Minister a world of trouble, and it did his Country a world of good. But as this pleaded necessity of Ministerial influence vitiates Parliament, and turns it into a direction contrary to its genius, so it is of the most dangerous tendency in another view, which has never, I believe, been adverted to. The Power in the House of Commons of impeaching a bad Minister, whose crimes no other form of Justice can reach, has ever been remarked as one of the happiest guards of our Constitution. But this Power is a mere nullity in the present management and habit of Parliament. Master of Parliament what has the Minister to fear? will the Servant raise his voice against his bountiful Lord? will the injured and insulted People find a Protector, an Avenger in the confederate of the Minister's crimes? nor will a change of Administration

ministration revive the avenging genius of the Constitution. Ministers standing in the same predicament, and having the same to fear for themselves, will have a tender sympathy for each other, nor will a Parliament still disposed to corruption, throw discredit on the trade by the punishment of its past Corrupters.

He concluded with hoping better of the future prosperity of his Country than some of its wiser and best friends dared to flatter themselves with. But nothing assuredly could effect this, unless a renewal of the Constitution. A languid and sickly frame, either in the individual or politic body could promise no vigorous and well prosecuted exertions. The ruin, from whose brink it was so frightful to look down, had issued from the abuses which the Petition wished to rectify. And as England previous to the existence of her colonies had risen to her height of greatness from the inexhausted resources of her free and manly Government, she might from the same actuating spirit re-possess and maintain her rank among nations. All depended upon the virtue of the People.

LORD SURREY closed the debates with an address which conveyed a singular satisfaction to every hearer. He apologized for addressing the Meeting at all, as indeed he was not a Freeholder of the County; but he trusted that the honour of a long connection with the County from residence and property, which his family had

had enjoyed, would excuse him ; that he should not be deemed an intruder in presenting himself before them, in expressing his warmest approbation of the measure, though a sense of propriety repelled him from signing the Petition. It afforded him the highest pleasure to behold a perfect unanimity on so important a subject, but the business ought not to rest with their present act ; they would but partially serve the cause in which they had so laudably engaged, if they did not accompany their individual signatures with their most active exertions. They must address themselves to their countrymen, persuade, exhort, inform, and use every honest means to give weight to their Petition in Parliament, by procuring to it a large and general approbation. They were not to flatter themselves that it would not be opposed, the face of unanimity in the present Meeting should not inspire in them a dangerous security. It would be opposed, powerfully opposed ; not only by those from whom nothing better was to be expected, by the friends and supporters, in and out of Parliament, of the late ruinous Administration ;—but he was sorry to add, by some of the most respectable characters, who had hitherto been the fast friends of the People and the Constitution, and whose opinions would derive a weight from the reverence which their past conduct had won them. Whether they were warped by an interest in those Boroughs, which might be affected
by

by the Petition, or a tenaciousness of certain speculative notions which they had adopted, he would not decide, as they were not present to answer for themselves; but such were the opponents whom they were to resist, and resist with all the force of argument and sollicitation. He believed the County of Nottingham had not the sin of one private Borough to answer for: he wished it were equally free from all imputation of corruption and vitiating influence; but if Gentlemen thought differently from the Petitioners, he wished they had been present, to have urged their objections. The Meeting was in the face of day, and of the country, and this would have become them as men and as citizens. The Reform was necessary in a striking view, as not only Lords and Ministers, and Asiatic plunderers, might invade the appropriated Rights of the People, but even a King of France might at the price of 5000l. a borough, send Representatives of himself to the Commons house, and command an ascendancy in a British Parliament. The practicability of such daring outrages, issued from the horrid state of Representation. If the Electors of every Borough consisted in a number of British Freemen, such attempts would not even be conceived. He praised Lord Gallway, for the disinterestedness of his conduct, in being superior to the temptations of his Borough interest, when the interests of his Country called for his approbation and support; if in the issue

of the business he should be thrown on the affections of his Country for a seat in Parliament, which at present he held as by his own right, a grateful Country could not fail to make every handsome return. He concluded with recommending the subject of the Petition to their best affections; there was a spirit and vigour in the Constitution, which, as the last Speaker had observed, would awe even the Legislature in great occasions; and if the People, with a firm and manly tone, called for Justice, they must obtain it.

The unanimous approbation of the Petition followed Lord Surrey's speech, when after some Resolutions, which may be seen in the advertisement, Lord George Sutton closed the Meeting, with thanking them for the honour they had done him in calling him to the Chair, and assuring them of all the support which either as a Citizen or Member of Parliament he could give to the prayer of their Petition.

Paper V.

Petition by the County of Carnarvon, with a Letter prefixed, from JOHN PARRY, Esq; Chairman of the Carnarvonshire Committee, to the Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

Rev. Sir,

I HAD lately the honour of receiving a Letter from you, with the Proceedings of the Committee of the County of York. I am now to acquaint you, that a Petition, whereof the inclosed is a copy, is now signing in the County of Carnarvon, and will, in due time, be ready to be presented to Parliament; that the Carnarvonshire Committee, in preparing and recommending this Petition to the County, had an idea of submitting to the wisdom of Parliament, a general Reform in the several matters complained of without making any particular declaration, hoping that a Committee of the House of Commons would be appointed to take these grievances into consideration; that they wish for a free communication of sentiments with the Committee of the County of York, for whose opinion they entertain the greatest

greatest respect, and to submit to their consideration, whether it will not be more proper to postpone giving Instructions to their Representative until the fate of the general Petitions is determined.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

Your most obedient and most faithful servant,

JOHN PARRY, Chairman.

LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS, Dec: 18, 1787.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain
in Parliament assembled.*

The Humble Petition of the Gentlemen, Clergy,
and Freeholders of the County of Carnarvon,

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners consider the British Constitution as originally framed, the most perfect system of good government that can possibly exist, being admirably calculated to promote the ease and happiness of the subject.

Your Petitioners further shew, That the alterations which have been introduced into that Constitution, are inimical to those free principles on which it is founded, and that the extreme inequality in the Representation of the People, the long duration of Parliament, and the very
O 2 expensive

expensive mode of election for Representatives, are measures fundamentally wrong, and grievances of alarming tendency.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly intreat this Honourable House to take the same into their most serious consideration, and to apply such remedy to these great constitutional evils as to the wisdom of this House shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Paper VI.

Proceedings at a General Meeting of the Town of St. Edmund's Bury, on the 2d day of January, 1783.

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants, held this day at the Assembly-Room, pursuant to public notice :

MR. ROBERT WALPOLE was called to the Chair; and a motion being made and seconded, and the question put,

Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that a Petition, expressive of their sense on a Reform in the Representation of

of the People in Parliament, and of this Borough in particular, be presented to the Honourable House of Commons.

The following Petition was then read :

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain
in Parliament assembled,*

The Humble Petition of the Gentry, Clergy,
Traders, and other Inhabitants of the Town
of St. Edmund's Bury, in the County of
Suffolk,

Sheweth,

THAT the inequality of the present state of Representation, though derived from a variety of concurrent causes, appears to your Petitioners to be in no instance more remarkable than in that of the privilege of election, exercised in great towns by a very small proportion of the inhabitants, to the exclusion of the rest; who, content as they might be without the peculiar privilege annexed to Corporations, cannot, at the same time, without regret, feel themselves destitute of the first of Constitutional Rights—A share in the Election of those who are chosen to represent them.

Your Petitioners desire to state to this Honourable House, that the two Representatives for Bury are elected by a Corporation, under a Charter from King James the First, consisting

when full, of one Alderman or First Magistrate, twelve capital Burgeſſes, and twenty-four of the Common Council, the vacancies being ſupplied by election, made according to the Charter, by the Corporate Body only.

Your Petitioners further ſubmit to this Honourable Houſe, that the Town of Bury is an ancient and well inhabited town, conſiſting of more than 6000 inhabitants, of whom 500 and upwards are regularly aſſeſſed to the pariſh rates.

To the wiſdom and juſtice of this Honourable Houſe, your Petitioners therefore reſpectfully apply, praying that their Petition may be taken into conſideration, and ſuch relief granted on the premiſes as ſhall appear beſt adapted to the State and circumſtances of the Town, agreeably to the conſtitutional principles of Representation.

And your Petitioners will ever pray. &c.

A motion then being made and ſeconded, and the queſtion put,

Reſolved unaniouſly, That this Petition be preſented to Parliament; afterwards the following Reſolves were agreed to:

Reſolved unaniouſly, That Sir Tho. Charles Bunbury, Bart. and Sir John Rous, Bart. Members for the County, be requeſted to preſent this Petition to Parliament.

Reſolved unaniouſly, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that John Balders, Eſq; Meſſrs. Robert

Robert Hayward, Tho. Robinson, John Cooke, William Buck, John Le Grice, and William W. Steele, with the Chairman, be appointed a Committee to wait upon Sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, Bart. and Sir John Rous, Bart. Members for this County, with this Petition.

Resolved unanimously, That the said Committee be empowered to present this Petition at the respective houses of the inhabitants, in order to receive the signatures of those by whom it may be approved.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Henry Seymour Conway, and Sir Charles Davers, Bart. for their spirited and steady opposition to the injurious measures of the late Administration, and particularly to the former, for his motion to discontinue offensive war in America, which had so long continued contrary to Justice, to the great prejudice of Commerce, and the hazards of the best interests of the Community.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Capel Loft of Troston-Hall, in this County, Esq; for his obliging and able assistance in bringing forward the business of this day.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman.

ROBERT WALPOLE,
Chairman.

✶ A Petition from the inhabitants of Tiverton, Devonshire, was signed and presented to the House of Commons immediately after the recess.—The Petition set forth, that though the Borough contains 5000 inhabitants, twenty-five men only, (many of them non-residents and placemen) and chosen by themselves, elect two Representatives to Parliament. The inhabitants, therefore, humbly Petition the House of Commons for a more adequate and proportionate Representation of that Borough.

Paper VII.

Advertisement agreed to at a previous Meeting at Truro, on the 6th of January, 1783, calling a General Meeting of the Frecholders of the County of Cornwall, who were friendly to a Reform in the Representation of the People in Parliament; with Minutes respecting the first Meeting, and the Proceedings which were the Result of it.

TRURO, Jan. 6, 1783.

WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, are of opinion, that the present state of the Parliamentary Representation of the People in general, is highly inadequate; but more particularly of the inhabitants of the County of Cornwall, where about one thousand and fifty persons, who have votes in the different Boroughs, return forty-two Members; whereas the

the County at large, containing two thousand two hundred Freeholders; sends only TWO.

It is therefore our wish, that our sentiments, on this important subject, be communicated to such gentlemen as we have reason to think will unite with us; and that they be requested to co-operate in every legal and constitutional method for the Redress of so great an evil.

Thomas Carlyon,
J. Stackhouse,
John Carlyon,
Christopher Hawkins,

Francis Gregor,
R. L. Gwatkin,
* Francis Gregor, jun.
W. J. Temple.

* Now Member for the County of Cornwall.

Minutes respecting the First Meeting, and the Proceedings which were the Result of it.

THE First Meeting at Truro, on the 6th of January, 1783, was a private one; in consequence of previous conversation and correspondence.

The Resolution of this First Meeting was circulated through the County, and a day appointed for a general Meeting, to consider the expediency of a Petition to Parliament for a more equal Representation. It was fully and respectably attended; a Petition was read, approved and

and signed by all present. A subscription was then entered into, to defray the expence of circulating it through the County for signatures; and it was chearfully subscribed by almost every person who had a vote. The Petition was then forwarded to the County Members, and presented to Parliament by them.

They, viz. Sir William Lemon and Mr. Eliot, were both friendly to the measure. And it is understood, that the sentiments of the Cornish Gentlemen, who at that time supported the Petition, remain generally unaltered.

✻ The Advertisement and Minutes respecting the Cornish Petition, for a more equal Representation, were communicated by a respectable Friend from Cornwall, but no endeavours to procure the Petition itself have hitherto been successful.

Paper VIII.

*Proceedings at a General Meeting of the County
of Essex, on the 10th day of April, 1783.*

AT a General County Meeting, held at the Shire-Hall at Chelmsford, on Thursday the 10th of April, 1783; summoned by John Godfave Cross, Esq; High-Sheriff, at the requisition of several Gentlemen, for the express purpose of petitioning Parliament for a more equal Representation and shortening the duration of Parliament, and also for an Address of thanks to the Throne for the Peace.

THE High-Sheriff having declared the intention of his summoning the Meeting, declined the Chair.

John Jolliff Tuffnell, Esq; was unanimously voted as Chairman to the Meeting.

A Petition to the House of Commons was moved by Mr. Fytche, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Onley.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain,
in Parliament assembled,*

*The Humble Petition of the Nobility, Gentry,
Clergy, and other Inhabitants of the Coun-
ty of Essex,*

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners, sensible of the original excellency of the Constitution of this Country, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the genuine principles on which it was founded.

Your Petitioners further shew, That it is necessary to the welfare of the People, that the Commons House of Parliament should have a common interest with the nation; and that, in the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, the House of Commons do not sufficiently speak the voice of the People.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Honourable House to take into their most serious consideration, the Restoration of the Constitution to its original purity, by a more equal Representation of the People, and by shortening the duration of Parliament.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

The Petition being unanimously agreed to, was adopted as the act of the Meeting, to be signed

signed by the Chairman ; the Members of the County to be requested to present it.

An Address to the King, on the Peace, being moved and seconded, was unanimously agreed to, as follows :

To the KING's most excellent MAJESTY,

Sire,

WE your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, Gentlemen, Clergy, Manufacturers, and other Inhabitants of the County of Essex, beg leave, as well in common with our fellow-subjects, as from local considerations, to thank your Majesty for the blessing of Peace ; which has already tended to relieve the numerous Poor of this Manufacturing County, whose daily labour, *where haply employment could be had*, would not, till now, afford them their daily bread : And when your Majesty's most gracious example, in this æconomical Reform of your Household, shall be extended by the Legislature to all the other branches of the Public Expenditure, agreeable to our Petitions ; and consequently an assured Plan of lessening our enormous debt be prudently laid, and faithfully executed.— We do not doubt but the credit, industry, and integrity of our Merchants, Manufacturers, and Tradesmen, can, on the only just basis of Commerce, reciprocal advantage, so well support that of Great-Britain, as not to fear the rivalry
of

of any State; and fully enable your Majesty to support the dignity of your Crown, against the turbulent policy of any confederated Powers, by the loyalty, wealth, and spirit, of your Majesty's most grateful subjects.

Resolved unanimously, That this Address be presented by the Members of the County, attended by such Gentlemen as think proper.

Resolved unanimously, That the Meeting re-appoint the Committee of Association, with its former powers, and to add to their number and chuse a Chairman.

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting highly approving the Quintuple Alliance, empower their Committee to appoint and send six Deputies to join that respectable Body, to watch the effects of the Petitions of the People, praying for a just and equal Representation, and short Parliaments.

Resolved unanimously, That Thomas Brand Hollis, Esq; be the Chairman; and that the following 17 names be added to the Committee:

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Rev. C. Onley, | Joseph Savill, sen. |
| Messrs. Golden, Griggs, | Joseph Savill, jun. |
| P. P. Todd, | Robert Tindall, |
| B. Crakanthorp, | Dr. Kirkland, |
| P. Blincow, | M. Pugh, |
| T. Isaacs, | — Clapham, |
| A. Morley, | Joseph Smith, |
| Rev. J. Cautley, | Jacob Paterson. |
| Messrs. N. Westcomb, | |

Resolved,

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the High-Sheriff for his readiness in calling the County Meeting, on this most important business.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to J. Jolliff Tuffnell, Esq; the Chairman, for his candour and impartial conduct.

Resolved unanimously, That this Meeting empower five Members of the Committee to call a Meeting when the business requires it, and that this Meeting be adjourned.

J. JOLLIFF TUFFNELL,
Chairman.

Paper IX.

Proceedings of a County Meeting, held at Lewes, in Sussex, on the 18th of January, 1783; with a Letter from the DUKE of RICHMOND to the High-Sheriff subjoined.

THE public notice given by the High-Sheriff being read, the business of the day was opened, and the nature of it explained by Sir GODFREY WEBSTER, who, after a very pertinent and judicious exordium, in which he strongly enforced the right of petitioning in the subject, produced and read, in the form of a motion, a Petition, founded on so firm a basis, and couched in such concise and constitutional language, that we defy even the abettors of venality and corruption themselves to brand it with their wonted epithets, factious! interested! or rebellious!—which Sir Godfrey asserted was the language used by those who wished to stem the progress of this grand national Reform.

The Petition being read, it immediately called forth the attention of that known friend to his country, Col. HAY, who rose, and declared that it met his most hearty concurrence and assent, and he begged to second it.

This

This called up the Hon. Major PELHAM, who, in a very sensible and well delivered speech, said he disapproved of the present mode of Reform; that his disapprobation proceeded from an inward conviction, and would not permit him to give his assent to the motion. The Hon. Member's opposition was supported by Mr. Shelly.

LORD GEORGE LENNOX next rose, and with a steady and determined uniformity, which has ever distinguished that nobleman, assented to the motion, and promised it his utmost support in the House of Commons.

Mr. Serjeant KEMPE now spoke in a very animated strain, in reply to Mr. Pelham; after which the debate was obstructed by Mr. Courthope's calling for an explanation of certain words in the Petition, i.e. "separate interest."

This occasioned LORD SURREY to rise, who said, by "separate interest" was meant the Representatives of venal Boroughs, through whom, added his Lordship, in consideration of a specific sum, the French King might obtain a seat in the British Senate House for a man, who should come there for the determined purpose of betraying the dearest Rights and Interests of this Country.—This explanation was satisfactory to Mr. Courthope.

The debate on the question was now returned to; and Mr. Pelham, in the course of his speeches, having expressed his *heartly approbation of shortening the duration of Parliaments*, confessed

that *grievances existed*; that he wished to see the Yeomanry of England enjoy a larger share in electing the Representatives of the People, but feared too wide a door might be opened; that certain systems might be brought forward, which he could not approve of; and on this resting his arguments for not assenting to the motion, in his capacity as a Freeholder, but declaring, at the same time, that as the Representative of the People, he should always be happy to obey the commands of his Constituents.

LORD SURRY got up and endeavoured to persuade him, that the arguments he made use of should have made him concur with the Petition, and not oppose it; that a man could not be a friend to the frequency of election, who could oppose the establishing the rights of it in the People, who were notoriously deprived thereof, whenever a Borough became the private property of an individual. His Lordship called it a strange perversion of Justice, that the Legislature should deprive poor individuals of their franchise, (as in the case of the neighbouring Borough of Shoreham) and think the safety of the Constitution required their adding a large district of the country to the Borough, for being tempted by small bribes of ten or twenty guineas, to sell a single vote, while they permitted noblemen, of the very first rank and fortune, to pursue, with impunity, the scandalous traffic of selling seats in Parliament for thousands:

lands; which to their eternal disgrace they most notoriously practised; that he could not reconcile the honourable Gentleman's wish to increase the power of the Yeomanry of England, with opposing a measure which evidently tended to produce that effect; that he revered the name of Pelham; and that the last time he appeared in that place, was to oppose the honourable Gentleman's re-election, because he had been found voting with men whose principles and conduct had nearly ruined this country; that he hoped never to see him amongst them again, and that he was happy to find him disposed to support the inquiry in Parliament; and that while he maintained the principles of the Pelhams, his predecessors, he would come on a future occasion, with infinitely more pleasure, to support, than he had done to oppose him.—He observed, that out of twenty-eight Members, not more than ten were connected with the County.

His Lordship in reply to Mr. Shelly, who expressed his fears of distressing the King's Ministers, informed him, that in various conversations he had had with the Earl of Shelburne, the noble Lord had repeatedly declared, that a Reform in the Representation of the People had his warmest wishes, and should have the most honourable support in Parliament: That Mr. Pitt had declared he held the Reform essential to the Constitution, and would never abandon the hopes of seeing it effected.

The debates being finished, the following Letter from the Duke of Richmond to the High Sheriff was read, after which the question was put, and almost unanimously carried, there appearing not more than ten dissenting hands.

WHITEHALL, Jan. 17, 1783.

Sir,

YOU may easily believe, that being one of those who joined in requesting you to call a County Meeting, nothing but illness can prevent my attending it; and it is with infinite regret I submit to the decision of my Physicians, who pronounce, that it is not safe for me to leave London.

I trust that my sentiments on the subjects of Parliamentary Reform are in general sufficiently known, and that without further assurances I might be depended upon for giving it every support in my power; but some circumstances made me wish to state them as briefly as possible to the County of Sussex. They are formed on the experience of twenty-six years, which, whether in or out of Government, has equally convinced me that the Restoration of a genuine House of Commons, by a renovation of the Rights of the People, is the only remedy against that system of Corruption which has brought
the

the nation to disgrace and poverty, and threatens it with the loss of Liberty.

I take the grievance of the present state of election to be its gross inequality. All the Electors in Great-Britain do not amount to one sixth part of the whole People, and a still greater inequality subsists in the elections made by that sixth part; for one-seventh part of them elect a majority, so that one forty-second part of the nation disposes of the property of the whole, and have their lives and liberties at command. And this forty-second part, far from consisting of the most opulent part of the kingdom, is composed of the small Boroughs, most of which are become either the private property of individuals, or are notoriously sold to the best bidder; so that the Counties and great Cities are, in fact, as well as the great mass of the People, swallowed up in this system of Corruption.

My ideas of Reform undoubtedly go to one that shall be compleat and general throughout the kingdom. I see such fatal consequences arise from the present partial and accidental state of elections, that I cannot take upon me to propose any new mode that partakes of the same defects. If we do not differ from the Abettors of Corruption upon the broad principle of inequality in election, and the universal Right of the People to be represented, and are contending only for a degree of partiality, more or less, I fear our ground is not sound; if we mean only to substitute

stitute partiality for partiality, and are struggling but for its extent, one man's whim may be as good as another's conceit, and we have nothing certain to direct us ; and if inequality is still to subsist, the advocates for the present system will have the sanction of time, and the risk of changes, to oppose to us, which will have their weight, when it is but for a change of partiality that we contend.

I have thought that Parliamentary Reform had much more simple and unerring guides to lead us to our end ; I mean the true Principles of the Constitution, and the Rights of the People. If these exist, I do not consider myself at liberty to speculate upon systems. I have no choice, but to give to every man his own.

But this, it seems, is by some thought impracticable ; and the Rev. Mr. Wyvill, in his Letter of the 7th of December, to Alderman Crosby, as Chairman of the Committee of the Livery of London, which has been published, very concisely decides it to be so : For I presume his objection of impracticability is not confined to my Plan, which I believe he has never seen, but to the extent of the idea ; and yet Mr. Wyvill, in the second Address of the Yorkshire Committee to the Electors in Great Britain, speaking of the more and less extensive Plan, says, " That the diversity of sentiment does not arise from a difference of political principles, for

jij

in them there is *an entire agreement*, but solely from considerations of a prudential nature."

How far it is wise for those who *entirely agree in principle* upon the Rights of Men, to endeavour to persuade them, that the recovery of their Birth-rights and most essential interests "are not reducible to practice, nor attainable by any regular or constitutional efforts of theirs," is what I must leave to others to determine. But the truth of this assertion is what I can never subscribe to. I cannot but think that this nation ever has its own power, by peaceful and constitutional efforts, to do itself justice; and that nothing can render attempts for this purpose impracticable, but either a general indolence and indifference to all that requires exertion, though for the noblest purposes, or such prejudice to favourite systems as shall divide the People.

To guard against such an imputation falling on me, I am most ready to agree to an Address in the most general terms, not pointing at any specific mode of Reform in the Petition, or by Instructions to our Members, or by Resolutions, but submitting the remedy, as in my opinion it ought to be in the first instance, to Parliament itself; which I conceive to be at least as equal to such a consideration as any Provincial Committee.

Should Mr. Wyvill's first or second Plan be proposed in Parliament, or any thing like it, although

though I shall lament that we for a moment quit our advantageous ground of the Constitution and the Rights of Men, yet I shall certainly give every support in my power to this or to any amendment. And it certainly will be a considerable improvement, that instead of a forty-second it should be a thirty-sixth or thirtieth part that shall decide the concerns of the whole People. It will be something material they will have gained, and may become a step to the more easy attainment of their full privileges.

I shall most sincerely hope, that that Plan may be found attainable; but I never can consent to tell the People, and I hope in God they never will believe, that the recovery of any Right, which Nature and the Constitution has given them, is impracticable. On the contrary, convinced myself, I wish them ever to believe that whenever they please to claim them, they will, and must, have the full extent of their Rights.

I have thought it necessary to say thus much, on an impression I cannot think indifferent the Public should entertain.

The measure for which you are assembled meets with my hearty concurrence; and I shall be happy if these, my sentiments, which I beg you would communicate to the Meeting of the County of Sussex, should meet with their approbation.

It

It is with the highest esteem and regard that
I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

RICHMOND, &c.

TO WILLIAM FRANKLAND, Esq;

*High-Sheriff of the County
of Suffex.*

NUMBER XII.

NUMBER XII.

Paper I.

Resolutions at a Meeting, on the 20th of December, 1782, of the Committee of Association, re-appointed at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 19th day of December, 1782.

PRESENT,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| Mr. F. Smyth | Rev. John Bourne |
| Mr. Micklethwaite | Sir James Norcliffe |
| Dr. Spencer | Mr. H. Duncombe |
| Sir George Strickland | Mr. Dring |
| Rev. William Comber | Mr. Strickland |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. Ward |
| Mr. Edmunds | Mr. Croft |
| Mr. Frankland | Mr. Chaloner |
| Mr. Battle | The Dean of York |
| Mr. Sykes | General Hale |
| Mr. Waines | The Earl of Surrey |
| Mr. Morritt | Mr. Foord |
| Rev. James Lawfon | Mr. Yorke |
| Mr. Courtney | Mr. Tooker |
| Mr. Wolrich | Mr. Dalton |
| Mr. Childers | Sir Charles Turner |
| Mr. Cradock | Mr. R. Wilfon |
| Rev. John Dixon | Rev. James Wilkinfon |
| Mr. Shore | Mr. Hill |
| Mr. Pool | Mr. Anderfon |
| Mr. Peirfe | Rev. Richard Shuttleworth |
| Mr. Richard Milnes | |

Resolved,

Resolved, That Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Bart. be added to this Committee.

Resolved, That the Sub-Committee of Association be re-appointed, with its former powers.

Resolved, That the standing orders of the Committee of Association, under its former appointment by the County of York, be continued.

Resolved, That this Committee will exert itself, with unremitting attention and zeal, to execute the trust reposed in them, by the appointment of the County of York, on the 19th of December, 1782.

Read a Letter from the Committee of Huntingdonshire, in farther answer to the Circular Letter of the 1st of November last.

Resolved, That the Chairman be directed to prepare an Answer to the several Public Bodies, who have given their opinion and advice upon the Circular Letter of the Committee, dated November 1, 1782; to be laid before the Committee to-morrow morning.

Resolved, That engrossed copies of the Petition be sent to the Gentlemen who circulated the former County Petition, and that these Gentlemen be requested to apply particularly to any other Gentlemen, who are friendly to the measure, for their assistance, in tendering the Petition to the Freeholders in their respective neighbourhoods for their signatures.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned till to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper II.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 21st of December, 1782; with a Circular Letter by the Chairman annexed, in answer to the several Public Bodies who had given their opinion and advice to the Committee, on the subject of the Circular Letter, dated Nov. 1, 1782.

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Sir James Norcliffe | Mr. Poord |
| General Hale | Dr. Swainston |
| Mr. Croft | Rev. William Dade |
| Mr. F. Smyth | Mr. Strickland |
| Mr. Dring | Mr. R. Wilfon |
| Rev. John Dixon | Rev. Robert Croft |
| Mr. Chaloner | Mr. Grimston |
| Rev. John Robinson | Dr. Spencer |
| Mr. Lodge | Mr. Danby |
| Mr. Childers | The Dean of York |
| Colonel Thornton | |

Read the Letter prepared by the Chairman, pursuant to the Resolution of yesterday, which is approved of, by the Committee, as a proper Answer to the several Public Bodies who have given their opinion and advice on the subject of the Circular Letter, dated Nov. 1, 1782.

Resolved.

Resolved, That the Committee be adjourned, subject to a call by the Sub-Committee or by the Chairman, at the requisition of any five Members.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Circular Letter agreed to by the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 21st of December, 1782.

Sir,

I am directed by the Committee of the County of York, to transmit to you copies of the Proceedings of the General Meeting of that County, on the 19th day of December instant; and also the Resolutions of the Committee on the 17th, 18th, 20th, and 21st days of December; and to request you will take an early opportunity to communicate them to the

The Petition which the County of York has adopted, is drawn up in general terms, in conformity to the opinion and advice of all the friends to the measure of Parliamentary Reform. But, although many Public Bodies have expressed the strongest approbation of the Propositions of Reform submitted to their judgment in the Circular Letter of the Committee, dated November

vember 1st, 1782, yet the Committees of Middlesex, Suffex, Huntingdonshire, London, Westminster, and Southwark, having declared their apprehension, that at present the recommendation of those or any other specific Propositions by the County of York, in the form of instructions to their Members, might tend to produce dissention among the several Petitioning Bodies: The Yorkshire Gentlemen, conscious how important to the public welfare it is that the friends of the Constitution should be unanimous in their intended application to Parliament for its restoration, determined to postpone, for some time, their proposed measure of instructing their Representatives; nevertheless it appeared to them advisable to declare, that if a Parliamentary Reformation should be effected in the terms proposed in the said Circular Letter, such Reformation would be accepted by the County of York with high approbation.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 24, 1782.

Paper III.

*Resolution at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee of
Association of the County of York, on the 20th
of January, 1783.*

P R E S E N T,

Rev. WILLIAM MASON, Chairman.

Mr. St. Quintin
Mr. Croft

Rev. John Robinson
Dr. Swainston

Ordered, That a Circular Letter be sent by the Clerk to the several Gentlemen, who have Duplicates of the Petition under their care throughout the County, requesting a return of the number of signatures already obtained there-to, and intimating that the Duplicates may be kept out till the end of the first week in February, but desiring that the whole may be sent in by Saturday, February the 8th.—Also to inquire if any district has not had the Petition tendered to it, and ask the Gentlemen to point out, in that case, what mode of circulating it there may be proper.

W. MASON, Chairman.

Paper IV.

*Resolution at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee
of Association of the County of York, on the
23d of January, 1783; with a Letter from the
Rev. C. WYVILL to the Dean of York annexed.*

P R E S E N T,

WILLIAM WITHERS, Esq; Chairman.

**The Dean of York
Rev. William Mason
Dr. Swainston
Rev. John Dixon**

**Rev. Robert Croft
Rev. John Robinson
Mr. Croft**

**Read a Letter from the Rev. Mr. Wyvill,
addressed to the Dean of York, and resolved to
transmit the same to Colonel Foord, at Scarbo-
rough, for his opinion and advice to the Sub-
Committee on the contents.**

**WILLIAM WITHERS,
Chairman.**

Letter

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Dean of
York.

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 20, 1783.

Sir,

AS it would be a considerable advantage to our general Plan of Parliamentary Reformation, if the Town of Scarborough could be induced to Petition for the Redress of their *local grievance*; I beg leave to offer to you, and to the Gentlemen of the Sub-Committee at their next Meeting, what has occurred to me as the most likely means to bring the Inhabitants of the Town, who are at present excluded from the right of election, to adopt a Petition similar to that of Bury. The Towns of Bury and Scarborough are both populous places, whose right of Representation is monopolized by a small number of the Inhabitants: there is in their respective cases a near resemblance; and if Scarborough should resolve to present a Petition to Parliament on this subject, that of Bury, with little variation, would serve their purpose exceedingly well.

I am persuaded the inhabitants at large only want the business to be properly brought before them, to take it up with warmth; they must feel the injury of being deprived of their election rights,

rights, and consequently wish to recover them. If any respectable Member of the Corporation of Scarborough would have the generosity to take the lead in the business, it would then be in the best and properest hands. I believe several Members of the Corporation have signed the County Petition; and if a letter were addressed to each of those Gentlemen by the Sub-Committee, exhorting them to seize this favourable opportunity to enlarge the privileges of their townsmen, I should hope some one of them might be prevailed on to make the patriotic attempt. If the Sub-Committee should not succeed with any respectable Member of the Corporation, I am far from thinking the case desperate.—I should then propose that a letter from the same Body be sent to Col. Foord,* the two Mr. Osbaldestons, Sir James Norcliffe, and Sir Wm. St. Quintin; suggesting to them the public advantage of a Petition from Scarborough, the probability of support if such a measure were properly proposed to the disfranchised inhabitants, and the earnest wish of the Sub-Committee, that those Gentlemen would jointly undertake the task. If all, or even if any one of those Gentlemen, would consent to make the experiment, then it would be time for the Sub-Committee to prepare the way for it, by a short letter to the unrepresented
Inhabitants

* This business was undertaken by Col. Foord, by whose prudence and zeal the inhabitants of Scarborough were induced to adopt a Petition nearly similar to that of Bury.

Inhabitants, stating the great injustice of their exclusion, the present chance of their re-admittance to their rights, and the zeal of the Sub-Committee to assist them in the attempt: Also proposing the examples of Bury, Launceston, Tiverton, &c. &c.

In this way I think the Sub-Committee might be instrumental in obtaining for the Town of Scarborough a redress of their peculiar grievance, and at the same time gain strength to the General Petition of the County, which is the cause of the Public. And as the County Petition has been some time in circulation at Scarborough, the attempt may now be made without any risque of losing signatures in that town, which was my sole reason for not submitting this Proposal to the consideration of the Sub-Committee before I left York.

Having thus laid my thoughts upon this subject before the Sub-Committee, plainly, and without reserve, I am fully assured they will act in the matter as they shall find upon the whole to be most for the advantage of that public cause which we have all so much at heart.

I am, dear Sir,

With great respect,

Your most faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

Paper V.

Letter from the Committee of the County of Middlesex to the Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman of the Committee for the County of York.

Sir,

THE Committee of the County of Middlesex have directed me, in their behalf, to return to you, and to the Committee of the County of York, our thanks for your friendly communication and intercourse, which has hitherto been kept up, and we trust will be continued, between the Petitioning Bodies, until they shall have finally and fully succeeded in obtaining a substantial Reform in the Representation of this kingdom in Parliament.

To be as nearly as possible unanimous, and universal in our desires and declarations, upon this subject, we consider as one great important object of that intercourse.

To maintain that unanimity it was, that the Committee of the County of Middlesex acquiesced readily to your wise recommendation of a general Petition for a Reform, in which all good men agree, and avoided any mention of the particulars of Reform, in which the best men may
for

for some time differ, and of which the worst men will at all times take advantage.

And, in our opinion, the effect of descending to particulars must be exactly the same, whether those particulars are contained in a Petition or Instructions, or in Resolutions.—And when we acknowledged the strength of your own arguments for excluding particulars from the *Petitions*, we supposed it impossible to expect those particulars in the shape of *Instructions*; and after having, by our solicitations, obtained from the Gentlemen of the Yorkshire Committee to forbear the proposed Instructions, we could not expect that the same particulars should appear under the name of *Resolutions*: for what, indeed, are stronger Instructions to Members than the Resolutions of a County Meeting? We are sorry that any particulars (from which we cautiously abstained) have, at this stage of our progress, been brought forward in any shape.

On the particulars contained in those Resolutions, it is now our duty to return to you our opinion :——

When we read those Resolutions, (under the name of Instructions) as communicated by your Letter, we feared that we could not give our concurrence to them.

We feared that private and pocket Boroughs were to be excluded from the desired Reform, and that Parliamentary Representation (that is, the power of disposing of the lives and interests

of the Public) was still to continue private property.—From this idea we must for ever be averse.

But we are happy to perceive from the narrative of the Proceedings of the County of York, on the 19th of last December, that our fears were created, as we trust, merely by the wording of those Resolutions; and with extreme satisfaction we are desirous to believe, that we are unanimous with your County: for in that narrative we find, Mr. Stanhope declaring, that “he thought the thanks of the Meeting were particularly due to a noble Lord then present, who had stood forward in support of a Parliamentary Reform, although he was Proprietor of a Borough,” and the Earl of Surrey declaring, that “no person could be against the present Petition, except the Proprietors of purchased Boroughs, and that the conduct of the Proprietor of a Borough, who came there to support a measure, *tending to overturn his own interest*, and of another Gentleman then present, (the Proprietor of half a Borough) *ought to be held out as a reproach* to those men who wish to stand well with the People; and yet support in Parliament, with all their eloquence, the withholding from them those Rights which time has robbed them of.”

We also find the unanimous thanks of the County “to three Gentlemen, for their disinterested

ested support of a Petition which AFFECTS
THEIR PRIVATE PROPERTY.”

We, therefore, the Committee of Middlesex, meeting the sense of the Committee and County of York from the Proceedings of the last County Meeting, and *especially* from those parts of the Proceedings which we have *extracted as above*, are happy in declaring ourselves unanimously of the opinion of the Earl of Surrey, so declared on this subject; and unanimously of the opinion of the County of York, that all persons acting on the principles which caused their thanks, deserve also the thanks and gratitude of all other parts of the country.

JAMES TOWNSEND,
Chairman of the Committee of the
County of Middlesex,

FREE-MASONS'-TAVERN, Feb. 12, 1783.

Paper VI.

Paper VI.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 17th of February, 1783, with a List of the Gentlemen annexed who assisted in circulating the Petition adopted by the County of York, on the 19th day of December, 1782.

P R E S E N T,

| |
|---|
| Rev. WILLIAM MASON, Chairman. |
| The Dean of York Rev. John Dixon |
| Mr. Croft Rev. John Robinson |

Resolved, That a Circular Letter of thanks be sent by the Chairman to the several Gentlemen who assisted in the circulation of the Duplicates of the Petition.

W. MASON, Chairman.

General

General Account of Signatures annexed to the Petition of the County of York, for a more equal Representation of the People, which was adopted by the County on the 19th of December, 1782, and presented to the House of Commons in the Year 1783.

| <i>By whom returned.</i> | <i>No. of Skins</i> | <i>No. of Signat.</i> | <i>Remarks.</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|
| Thomas Place, Esq; | 1 | 65 | { Only one skin signed. Mr. Dennis got the names at Easingwold in another skin. |
| Mr James Norcliffe | 1 | 131 | |
| Stephen Croft, jun. Esq; | 2 | 53 | { Assisted by the Rev. Mr. Simpson, &c. |
| Henry Duncombe, Esq; | 1 | 73 | |
| Rev. Mr. Cayley | 1 | 247 | |
| Harvey Thompson, Esq; | 1 | 70 | |
| C. S. Duncombe, Esq; | 1 | 70 | { These Duplicates were sent out to Mr. Stovin and Sir Wm. Milner, who transferred them to Mr. Moore and Mr. Fretwell of Pollington, as assistants. |
| William Garforth, Esq; | 1 | 0 | |
| Mr. Moore, Snaith | 2 | 184 | { Assisted by Mr. Warner in the North Division of Holderness. |
| Thomas Grimston, Esq; | 1 | 178 | |
| Sir William St. Quintin | 1 | 93 | { Assisted by Mr. Legard, &c. |
| John Courtney, Esq; | 2 | 328 | |
| J. S. Morrill, Esq; | 1 | 154 | { Assisted by Mr. Wainess, &c. |
| William Chaloner, Esq; | 2 | 291 | |
| William Willson, Esq; | 1 | 221 | { Assisted by Mr. Linskill, &c. |
| Ralph Jackson, Esq; | 1 | 107 | |
| William Battle, Esq; | 1 | 125 | { Assisted by Mr. Cragdock. |
| John Mathews, Esq; | 1 | 228 | |
| William Raines, Esq; | 2 | 78 | { Assisted by the Rev. Mr. Comber and the Rev. Mr. Robinson |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard. | 1 | 198 | |
| William Strickland, Esq; | 2 | 229 | |
| Carried forward | 27 | 3123 | |

| <i>By whom returned.</i> | <i>No. of Skins.</i> | <i>No. of Signa.</i> | <i>Remarks.</i> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Brought forward | 27 | 3123 | |
| Phil. Saltmarsh, jun. Esq; | 1 | 110 | |
| Rev. Mr. Wyvill | 2 | 238 | { Assisted in Swaledale by Mr. Stodart and Mr. Eliot, (agents to Sir Chas. Turner) in Arkendale, near Swaledale; also by Mr. Gregory Eilday of Patrick Brompton |
| John Anderson, Esq; | 1 | 210 | |
| John Yorke, Esq; | 1 | 107 | Assisted by Sir R.D. Hildyard |
| Thomas Willis, Esq; | 1 | 172 | |
| Thomas Fenwick, Esq; | 1 | 162 | |
| Rev. Mr. Lawson | 1 | 95 | |
| The Dean of Middleham | 1 | 62 | |
| John Pratt, Esq; | 1 | 28 | { The nine last skins received from Mr. Wyvill) |
| William Danby, Esq; | 1 | 91 | |
| Robert Grimston, Esq; | 1 | 63 | |
| Francis Edmunds, Esq; | 1 | 134 | |
| Thomas Cotton, Esq; | 1 | 12 | |
| Thomas Hayes, Esq; | 2 | 223 | { Assisted by Mr. Oates and Mr. Skelton |
| Samuel Shore, Esq; | 3 | 471 | Assisted by Mr. Booth, &c. |
| Rev. Mr. Deatry | 1 | 53 | |
| Rev. Mr. Dade | 1 | 25 | |
| Charles Poole, Esq; | 1 | 64 | { Assisted by the Rev. Mr. Bourne, &c. |
| Tho. Hill and Wm. Hill, Esqrs. | 1 | 423 | Assisted by Sir Wm. Milner |
| Francis Maude, Esq; | 1 | 99 | { Assisted by Mr. Arthing- ton, &c. |
| Gamaliel Lloyd, Esq; | 3 | 318 | { Assisted by Mr. Stansfield, &c. &c. |
| Thomas Yorke, Esq; | 1 | 41 | |
| William Baynes, Esq; | 3 | 283 | { Assisted by Mr. Brown, &c. as agents |
| Mr. Benjamin Sayle | 1 | 193 | |
| Samuel Tooker, Esq; | 1 | 161 | { Assisted by Mess. Walker, &c. &c. |
| St. A. Ward, Esq; | 1 | 184 | |
| C. W. Childers, Esq; | 1 | 100 | |
| Barnard Foord, Esq; | 3 | 452 | { Assisted at Scarborough by Mess. Halley, Cand- ler, &c.—Had Sir Geo. Strickland's Duplicate and circulated it at Hunmanby, &c. |
| Carried forward | 65 | 7697 | |

| <i>By whom returned</i> | <i>No. of Skins</i> | <i>No. of Signa.</i> | <i>Remarks.</i> |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Brought forward | 65 | 7697 | |
| Rev. Mr. Bourne | 1 | 25 | |
| Mess. Milnes's. Lodge, Buck, &c. | 12 | 1463 | |
| Henry Pairfe, Esq; | 1 | 115 | |
| Mr. M. G. Steell | 3 | 305 | } Assisted by Mr. James Dennis and Mr. Jack- son of Topcliffe. |
| Colonel Thornton | 1 | 20 | |
| Rev. Mr. Walker | 1 | 30 | |
| F. F. Foljambe, Esq; | 2 | 211 | |
| R. A. Athorpe, Esq; | 7 | 258 | |
| *skins signed at York | 1 | 28 | |
| A skin in London | | | |
| | 94 | 10,152 | |

Paper VII.

*Letter from JOHN BELL, Esq; of Scarborough, to
Mr. W. GRAY, Clerk of the Sub-Committee
of Association of the County of York.*

Dear Sir,

THE Petition signed here by the inhabitants was yesterday sent by the carrier from hence directed to you, and I hope you will receive it safe.

As it is thought improper to send it to Lord Tyrconnel, by reason of several of the Common-Council of this Corporation not having signed it, it is wished that the Petition may be transmitted by the Sub-Committee to Mr. Duncombe, for him to present to the House of Commons, and to request that he will move for its being read. As it is stated in the Petition, that the number of inhabitants (paying parish rates) amount to about 700, and it appears that 450 have only signed it. It may not be amiss to observe, that out of the remaining 250, there are a great number of widows whose signatures have not been applied for, and several who are absent from home; and that the real number of those who have refused to sign it does not exceed 40.
of

of which number there are 30 or upwards of the Common-Council, or capital Burgeſſes. The Corporation do not mean to give the Petition any oppoſition.

I am, Sir,

Your moſt obedient,

JOHN BELL.

SCARBOROUGH, 28th Feb. 1783.

The Sub-Committee met on the 3d of March, 1783, when it was reſolved to ſend the Scarborough Petition to Mr. Duncombe, to be preſented to Parliament, agreeably to the deſire contained in the preceding letter from Mr. Bell.

Paper VIII.

Reſolutions *which were propoſed by the Right Honourable WILLIAM PITT to the Houſe of Commons, on the 7th of May, 1783; with a Liſt of Members annexed, by whom his Motion was ſupported.*

1^{ſt}. Reſolved,
THAT the moſt effectual and practicable meaſures ought to be taken for the better preventing both bribery and expence in the election of Members to ſerve in Parliament.

2dly.

2dly. Resolved, That whenever it shall be proved before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, duly appointed to try and determine the merits of any election or return for any place in the kingdom, that the majority of the electors had been guilty of corrupt practices in such election; it will be proper, in all such cases, that such place shall from thenceforth be disabled from sending Representatives to Parliament; and that such of the Electors as shall not (by due course of law) be convicted of any such corrupt practices, shall be enabled to vote at the election of the Knights of the Shire in which such place shall be situated.

3dly. Resolved, That in order to give further security to the independence of Parliament, and to strengthen the community of interests between the People and their Representatives, which is essential to the preservation of our excellent Constitution on its true principles, it is proper that an addition should be made to that part of the Representation which consists of Members chosen by Counties and the Metropolis.

Mr. PITT gave notice to the House, that if the above Resolutions were carried, he should then move, That leave be given to bring in a bill to provide for the disabling such places from sending Members to Parliament, in which the majority of the Electors shall have been proved guilty of corrupt practices; and also, That leave
be

be given to bring in a bill for the better securing the independence of Parliament.

Mr. PITT having moved the first of the three above-mentioned Resolutions, a motion was made and seconded for the "*Order of the Day*," in order to get rid of Mr. Pitt's motion.

For the motion for the order of the day, 293 Members (including the two Tellers)—And the following 151 Members (including the two Tellers) divided against the motion for the order of the day.

The following Gentlemen voted with Mr. PITT :

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Bedfordshire</i> | S. A. St. John | <i>St. Germans</i> | E. J. Elliot |
| <i>Belton</i> | S. Whitbread | | Dudley Long |
| <i>Bedford</i> | J. Elwes | | W. Hanger |
| | W. Hartley | <i>Newport</i> | Lord Maitland |
| <i>Walsingham</i> | John Aubrey | <i>Carlisle</i> | Earl of Surrey |
| | Cr. Arcedeckne | <i>Derby</i> | Ld G. Cavendish, jun |
| <i>Leeds</i> | Earl Vernon | <i>Devonshire</i> | John Parker |
| <i>Wetherby</i> | Lord Mahon | <i>Dartmouth</i> | A. Holdsworth |
| | Sir J. B. Warren | <i>Hendon</i> | Sir G. Yonge |
| | R. Smith | <i>Oakhampton</i> | R. Fitzpatrick |
| | J. M. Smith | <i>Exeter</i> | John Baring |
| <i>Cambridgeshire</i> | Sir H. Peyton | <i>Dorsetshire</i> | Humphrey Sturt |
| <i>Cambridge University</i> | John Townshend | <i>Bradport</i> | Thomas Scott |
| <i>Cambridge</i> | W. Aclan | | Richard Beckford |
| <i>Gloucester</i> | Sir R. Cotton | <i>Corf Castle</i> | H. Banks |
| <i>Camwall</i> | Sir W. Lemon | <i>Wool</i> | W. Morton Pitt |
| | E. Elliot | <i>Durham</i> | John Lambton |
| <i>Lancashire</i> | Sir John Jarvis | <i>Ever</i> | Sir G. Savile |
| | S. Salt | | H. Duncombe |
| | G. Johnstone | <i>Beverley</i> | E. Anderson |
| <i>Trenton</i> | John Dawes | | |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Knarborough</i> | Lord Duncannon | <i>Northumberland</i> | Sir W. Middleton |
| <i>Northallerton</i> | James Hare | <i>Newcastle</i> | A. R. Bowles |
| <i>Pontefract</i> | H. Porfe | <i>Nottinghamshire</i> | C. Meadows |
| <i>Scarborough</i> | John Smith | <i>Notwick</i> | — Sutton |
| <i>Thirsk</i> | Earl Tyrconnel | <i>Nottingham</i> | R. Smith |
| <i>York</i> | Sir Tho. Galtayne | <i>Oxford University</i> | Sir W. Dolben |
| <i>Ripon</i> | * Ld J. Cavendish | <i>Oxford City</i> | Lord R. Spencer |
| <i>Hull</i> | | <i>Salop</i> | R. Hill |
| <i>Essex</i> | W. Wilberforce | <i>Shropshire</i> | Sir C. Leighton |
| <i>Goldchester</i> | John Luther | <i>Stafford</i> | J. Whitmore |
| <i>Gloucestershire</i> | Sir R. South | <i>Stamford</i> | Sir H. Bridgenall |
| <i>Gloucester</i> | G. Berkeley | <i>Taunton</i> | G. Forrester |
| <i>Hampshire</i> | John Webb | | Sir John Trevina |
| <i>Hertford</i> | John Scudamore | | John Halliday |
| <i>Lincolnshire</i> | R. P. Knight | | — Hemmet |
| <i>Herts</i> | W. Plumer | <i>Midland Port</i> | John Pennington |
| | T. Hulley | <i>Walls</i> | John T. udway |
| <i>Hertford</i> | W. Baker | | — Curtis |
| <i>Kent</i> | C. Martham | <i>Bath</i> | John J. Pratt |
| | F. Honeywood | <i>Minster</i> | H. Deafovy |
| <i>Malton</i> | C. Taylor | <i>Hampshire</i> | J. C. Jervoise |
| <i>Canterbury</i> | G. Guppy | <i>Portsmouth</i> | Sir H. Fetherston |
| | C. Robinson | | John Barrington |
| <i>Lancaster</i> | A. Rawlinson | | P. Arden |
| <i>Clithero</i> | John Lee | <i>Stafford</i> | R. B. Sheridan |
| <i>Leicestershire</i> | W. Pochin | <i>Staff II</i> | Sir John Rous |
| <i>Lincolnshire</i> | C. A. Pelham | <i>Staff III</i> | T. Staunton |
| | Sir John Thorold | <i>Donarick</i> | Sir G. Vannetel |
| <i>Stafford</i> | H. Cecil | <i>St. Edmund's Bury</i> | Sir C. Davers |
| <i>Bojlen</i> | Sir P. Burrell | <i>Surrey</i> | Sir J. Mawbey |
| <i>Crimley</i> | John Harrison | | Lord Althorpe |
| <i>Grantham</i> | G. Sutton | <i>Hampshire</i> | W. S. Stanhope |
| <i>Middlesex</i> | John Wilkes | <i>Southwark</i> | Sir R. Hotham |
| | G. Byng | | — Thornton |
| <i>Westminster</i> | Sir C. Wray | <i>Suffex</i> | Lord G. Lennox |
| | C. J. Fox | <i>Bramber</i> | H. J. Stanhope |
| <i>London</i> | F. Bull | <i>Steyning</i> | John Bullock |
| | N. Newnham | <i>Leves</i> | T. Kemp |
| | John Sawbridge | <i>Chichester</i> | R. Steele |
| <i>Monmouthshire</i> | Sir W. Lewis | <i>Warwick</i> | R. Ladbroke |
| <i>Norfolk</i> | John Hanbury | <i>Westmorland</i> | Sir M. le Fleming |
| <i>Lynn</i> | Sir E. Atley | <i>Appley</i> | W. Pitt |
| <i>Thetford</i> | C. Molinex | <i>Salisbury</i> | W. H. Bouverie |
| <i>Norwich</i> | Earl of Euston | <i>Calne</i> | James Townshend |
| <i>Northamptonshire</i> | Sir H. Harbord | <i>Criklade</i> | G. St. John |
| <i>Peterborough</i> | Lord Lucan | <i>Hindon</i> | L. Kenyon |
| <i>Higham Ferrers</i> | James Phipps | <i>Old Sarum</i> | T. Pitt |
| | F. Montague | <i>Wilton</i> | Lord Herbert |

* Sir Charles Furner being taken ill, was obliged to retire before the division.

W. Lygon
T. B. Rous
B. Roufe
John Trevannion
Lord Bulkeley
Sir G. Warren
John Vaughan
John Parry
W. Williams

W. Lygon
T. B. Rous
B. Roufe
John Trevannion
Lord Bulkeley
Sir G. Warren
John Vaughan
John Parry
W. Williams

Scotland

Sir H. Mackworth
H. Owen
John Sinclair
H. Dundas
Sir J. Henderson
C. Dundas
J. S. Stewart
Sir Tho. Dundas

Paper IX.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 1st of October, 1783; with the Requisition presented, in compliance with which that Meeting was called.

August 16, 1783.

To the REV. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL, Chairman of the Committee of Association of the County of York.

THE late Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York to the House of Commons, for a remedy of the national grievance in the unequal representation of the People in Parliament, having failed of the desired success, We whose names are subscribed, being Members of the said Committee of Association, request

you

you, in conformity to the Resolution of the last Meeting of the Committee holden on the 21st of December last, to call a Meeting of the Committee to be holden at York the latter end of September or beginning of October, in order to consider of the most proper measures to be taken for promoting the attainment of the great object of that Petition.

F. F. Foljambe,
Samuel Shore,
James Wilkinson;
Samuel Tooker,

Geo. Woodhead,
Samuel Walker,
Thomas Walker,
Jonathan Walker.

IN obedience to this requisition, I do give notice, that a Meeting of the Committee of Association for the County of York, will be held at York on Wednesday the 1st of October, 1783.

C. WYVILL.

HARTLEPOOL, Aug. 30, 1783.

PRESENT.

PRESENT,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Rev. William Mafon | Mr. J. Milnes, jun. |
| Sir Charles Turner | Mr. Grimston |
| Mr. Chaloner | Mr. Joseph Walker |
| Rev. Rich. Sykes | Mr. Thomas Walker |
| Mr. Booth | Rev. Luke Yarker |
| Mr. Tooker | Mr. Foljambe |
| Mr. P. Milnes | Lord Gallway |
| Rev. James Wilkinfon | Mr. Lodge |
| Mr. Walker | Mr. Courtney |
| Mr. Shore | Mr. Legard |
| Mr. H. Duncombe | Mr. James Milnes |
| Mr. F. Smyth | Rev. John Bourne |
| Mr. Strickland of Boynton | Mr. Micklethwaite |
| Mr. Waines | Mr. Dring |
| Mr. Yorke | Mr. Danby |
| Rev. Thomas Place | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Mr. Croft, | Mr. John Milnes |
| The Earl of Effingham | Mr. Edmunds |
| General Hale | Rev. ——— Harrison |
| Mr. Cradock | Rev. James Lawfon |
| Mr. Lloyd | Mr. Jackson |
| Rev. John Robinson | Mr. Wilfon |
| Sir R. D. Hildyard | Dr. Spencer |
| Mr. R. S. Milnes | Mr. Battle |
| Mr. Rawfon | Mr. St. Quintin |
| Rev. Fred. Dodsworth | Mr. Hill |
| Mr. Sayle | Mr. Dixon |
| Mr. Bell | Sir Thomas Gascoigne |
| Mr. Morritt | Mr. Hayes |
| Dr. Swainston | The Duke of Rutland,—elected this day. |
| Rev. William Comber | |
| Mr. Dalton | |

Resolved unanimously, That his Grace the Duke of Rutland, John Seavers Richardson, Esq; Jeremiah Dixon, Esq; Sam. Hamer Oates, Esq; Hans Buss, Esq; and Lieutenant-Colonel O'Carroll, be added to this Committee.

The several following Resolves were also unanimously agreed to, viz.

THAT the thanks of this Committee be given to the Right Hon. William Pitt for his excellent propositions submitted to Parliament on the 7th of May last, towards accomplishing a substantial redress of Parliamentary Abuses, complained of by the Petitions of the People.

That notwithstanding our wishes did not meet with success on that day, we still retain hopes that his virtuous perseverance, aided by the uncorrupt part of the Senate, and strenuously supported by the People, will in time effect such a Reformation of Parliament as may form a firm barrier against the inroads of corruption.

That the Chairman be directed to take the earliest opportunity of communicating the preceding Resolutions to the Right Hon. William Pitt.

That the thanks of this Committee be given to those Honourable Members of the House of Commons by whom Mr. Pitt's Propositions on the 7th of May were supported.

That it appears to this Committee that the rejection of those Propositions on the 7th of May may chiefly be imputed to the operation of that ruinous political system by which the civil war with America was lighted up, the British Empire dismembered, and the plan of
Parliamentary

Parliamentary Seduction carried to its last fatal extreme. And it is also considered by this Committee, that there-admission of the abettors of such a system into Power, is a most formidable obstacle to the necessary Renovation of the Constitution.

That it behoves the People of Britain, as they tender their own personal freedom and honour, the safety of the community, or the welfare of generations yet unborn, not to despair of the Public Weal; nor from an indiscriminate distrust of Public Men, to sink into a state of abject supineness and inactivity, and a neglect of those legal means of defence, by which the Constitution may yet be preserved. On the contrary, it is the earnest exhortation of this Committee to every friend to the peace and freedom of the nation, to stand forth in this hour of distress, and with unshaken courage, and by every vigorous and lawful effort, to support the Reformation of Parliament—without which, Britain must be overwhelmed by the accumulated miseries of a corrupt system of government.

That this Committee, assured that the bosoms of their Constituents are still animated with sentiments of public spirit and unabated zeal for the Constitution, doth again call upon the Freeholders of this great County to meet and deliberate on the propriety of renewing their application to Parliament for a more fair and equitable representation of the People; and if that shall be thought expedient, to represent to Par-

liament in decent but firm and manly terms of expostulation, the necessity for an effectual restoration of the Constitution, and that such Meeting be held on Thursday the 8th day of January, 1784.

That the Chairman be desired to write to the two worthy Members for this County, expressing in strong terms of approbation, the thanks of this Committee for their attendance and support given in the House of Commons to Mr. Pitt's motion for a Parliamentary Reform on the 7th of May last.

That the thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, for his indefatigable zeal and patriotic conduct during the whole Proceedings of this Committee.

That this Meeting be adjourned till to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

YORK-TAVERN, October 2, 1783.

*At the Adjourned Meeting of the Committee
of Association,*

Resolved,

THAT this Meeting be adjourned, subject to a Call by the Chairman on the requisition of any five Members.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper IX.

Paper X.

*Letter from the Chairman of the Committee of
Association of the County of York, to the Right
Hon. WILLIAM PITT.*

YORK, October 3, 1783.

Sir,

IN obedience to the direction of the Committee of Association for the County of York, I have the honour to transmit to you the inclosed account of their Proceedings at their late Meeting; and I am happy to assure you that their resolution of thanks to you for your conduct in Parliament on the 7th of May, and their resolution expressing their hope of success by your virtuous perseverance, properly supported by the incorrupt part of Parliament, and of the People, were passed with perfect unanimity.

I am, Sir, with high respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,
C. WYVILL.



Paper XI.

Paper XI.

*Letter from the Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT to the
Chairman of the Committee of Association of
the County of York.*

BERKLEY-SQUARE, NOV. 8, 1793.

Sir,

ON my return to Town, I received the honour of your Letter, accompanied by the Resolution of the Committee on the 1st of October. I have the greatest satisfaction in finding that the Propositions which I submitted to Parliament in the last Session are considered by them as tending to accomplish a Reform of the Parliamentary Abuses, complained of by the Petitions of the People. I trust I need not assure you, that no exertion or perseverance on my part shall be wanting in support of the principles on which those Propositions were founded; unsuccessful as my attempts have hitherto proved, I shall anxiously wait for a seasonable moment of renewing them, and eagerly embrace it whenever there is a just prospect of doing it with effect.

I am truly sensible of the obliging manner in which you have had the goodness to convey to me the sense of the Committee; and am, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,
W. PITT.

Paper XII.

*Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir GEORGE
SAVILE.*

BURTON HALL, October 8, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I AM directed by the Committee of Association for the County of York, to express to you, in strong terms of approbation, their thanks for your attendance and support given in the House of Commons to Mr. Pitt's motion for a Parliamentary Reform on the 7th of May. I was a witness on that occasion of your zeal for the public cause, which prompted you, yet feeble from the effects of a recent sickness, to engage in the debate; and also of your utter inability to bear the fatigue of that exertion which soon obliged you to desist.

Since that time you have intimated to me, that your effort to support that motion for the Reformation of Parliament would probably be the last action of your political life. These are circumstances which I cannot recollect without feeling a sincere concern and regret, mixed with that high respect and esteem which are so justly due to the purity of your character. Accounts
which

which have been just received of your relapse and dangerous state of health, must give every private friend, every friend to the welfare of the public, the utmost anxiety.

I shall only say, therefore, if your appearance in Parliament on the 7th of May should unfortunately be your last service to your Constituents, a life of such unfulfilled public virtue could not be more consistently closed than by that attempt, effectually to correct *the Corruption of Parliament*.

I am, Dear Sir,
 With most sincere regard,
 Your very faithful
 And obedient servant,
 C. WYVILL.

Paper XIII.

Paper XIII.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL, to HENRY
DUNCOMBE, Esq.

BURTON HALL, October 8, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I am directed by the Committee of Association for the County of York, to express to you, in strong terms of approbation, their thanks for your attendance and support given in the House of Commons to Mr. Pitt's motion for a Parliamentary Reform, on the 7th of May.

I execute the command of the Committee on this occasion with the greatest satisfaction, because I am perfectly acquainted with what firmness, integrity, and anxious assiduity you have laboured to promote that *Renovation of the Constitution* which your Constituents have so much at heart. For this they have ASSOCIATED; they have deputed a Committee; they have petitioned Parliament; and they will still petition and expostulate till the justice of their complaint be acknowledged, and some substantial redress be granted by Parliament.—For this you have concurred in all those *legal measures* of the County
of

of York; for this you have entered into their Association; you have co-operated with their Committee; you have signed their Petitions, and in Parliament you have given the most firm support to every measure tending in any degree to Restore the Constitution.

When you was the object of their choice, the Freeholders of Yorkshire trusted that they had found a worthy colleague of Sir George Savile, and gained another faithful friend to the Reformation of Parliament. This was their utmost hope and wish; in which I am bold to affirm, they have not been disappointed.—For the truth of this assertion, I appeal to their feelings, or to your uniform conduct in Parliament, without fearing the suspicion of partiality from that friendship, with which I am,

Dear Sir,

Most sincerely yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper XIV.

Letter from HENRY DUNCOMBE, Esq. to the Rev.
C. WYVILL.

NAWTON LODGE, Oct. 20, 1783.

Dear Sir,

I Received the honour of your letter, conveying to me the approbation the Committee of Association of the County of York has thought fit to express of my attendance and support given to Mr. Pitt's motion for a Parliamentary Reform, on the 7th of May.

I am much flattered in your assurance that my Parliamentary Conduct on this occasion has met the approbation of so respectable a part of my Constituents; and confess, I see in the same light with them the necessity of that Reform which you observe they have so much at heart. It was a singular satisfaction to me to remark the first men in office, and in character, giving their concurrence to the Proposition of Mr. Pitt. Among these you will read, with pleasure, the names of the first Secretary of State, and of the noble Lord, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; men, who, on that day, gave testimony to their
disinterested

disinterested wish for a better Representation of the People: looking, doubtless, for support in their ministerial capacity, rather to the justness of their views and the rectitude of their measures, than to the usual arts of influence and corruption. Indeed, Sir, the nation is sick of those arts, the effects of which so lately and so fatally experienced, have turned its attention to the true source, whence our calamities are derived, namely, the very inadequate state of the Representation of the People; by which the salutary restraints originally interposed against the errors, the weakness and the wickedness of Ministers, have been baffled and defeated. It is impossible not to lament the failure of those restraining powers in the last Parliament with respect to the measures of the then existing Administration, of which it is difficult to speak with much temper, when we consider the state in which they found this Country at their entrance into power, contrasted with the situation in which they left it. But is it probable that in similar cases, Parliament will ever hold a different conduct? It cannot be. While a large body of the People so deeply interested in the integrity, have so little share in the election of their Representatives; while the Minister still retains such influence, while he has (as it is called) the management of the House of Commons;—nay, while Members, as in the well known instance of the Government Boroughs, are suffered by
the

the most palpable absurdity to be sent to Parliament by the mandate of the Minister, whose conduct it is a peculiar part of the business of Parliament to superintend and control.

* Circumstanced as this Country is, it will be thought, perhaps, there never was a time when it were more to be wished, that Parliament possessed the good opinion and the confidence of the People. Our dismembered Empire, the low state of public credit, our exhausted resources, the millions that still remain unfunded, all speak the necessity of a perfect union between the governors and the governed, that has been rarely found to exist, even in the purest periods of the Constitution: The common objects of taxation begin to fail; the customs, the excise, the articles of luxury cannot afford much additional revenue; and while the experience of this year too well proves, that taxes which operate universally will create universal dissatisfaction; serious and thinking men will reflect how much and how naturally an acquiescence, under uncommon burdens, is connected with the degree of respect we pay to those who impose them. I wish not to inflame the minds of my countrymen; such a wish would ill suit my situation, and a disposition, thought, I trust, not unfriendly to public order and tranquillity. But I believe it will not be called a departure from that character, when I declare freely my hopes and expectations, that the Legislature will not delay to

VOL..II. S enter

enter upon the consideration of the *Reform of Parliament—a Reform, in my opinion, indispensable with a regard to the national happiness and security.*

I fear, Sir, I have detained you too long; but the subject is of uncommon importance. It remains only for me to beg you to present my best acknowledgments to the Gentlemen of the Committee for the favourable light in which they have chosen to regard my poor services, and to accept yourself those thanks from me which are so justly due to you for the obliging and kind manner in which you have communicated their orders.

I am, Dear Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient humble servant,
HENRY DUNCOMBE.

NUMBER XIII.

Paper 1.

*Communication on the 26th of November, 1783,
to the Sub-Committee of Association of the
County of York, of measures taken in consequence
of the expected Resignation, by Sir GEORGE
SAVILLE, of his Seat in Parliament; with his
Letter annexed, announcing his Resignation.*

PRESENT,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| The Dean of York | Dr. Swainston |
| Mr. Croft | Rev. John Bourne |
| Rev. William Mason | Mr. Hayes |
| Mr. Dring | Dr. Spencer |
| Rev. Robert Croft | Mr. Withers |

Mr. WYVILL laid before the Sub-Committee a Requisition from himself and other Gentlemen to the Sheriff of this County, to call a General Meeting of the Freeholders, for the nomination of a Candidate in the room of Sir George Savile, who has declared his intention to resign; and

The Sheriff's Answer, signifying his intention to call such Meeting, so soon as such resignation shall be authenticated.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

*To the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the
County of York.*

GENTLEMEN,

IT is not without a sensible concern that I find myself obliged to decline continuing in the exercise of the important and honourable office you have so long intrusted me with. Impressed as I am with a just feeling of the indulgence I have stood in need of, even when I was best able to fulfil the duty of my station, and (let me not forget to add) having amply received that indulgence, it would ill become me now to obtrude myself upon you to the end of a term, the probable remainder of which is far too long for you to lose, during the continuance of it, any part of the small proportion of voices you have in the House of Commons. It is true, and you have not to learn from me, how well answered your expectations have been in your last choice; but this, in one light, adds to the reasons which have weighed with me on the present occasion. Justice to my worthy Colleague, on whom all the laborious part of provincial business must fall, as indeed it has hitherto done, is a second reason for my place being supplied by an active and efficient Representative. The manner of executing my intended purpose, and the time of my applying for the usual means of vacating a Seat in Parliament,

ment, have, however, caused me some anxious thoughts, and it has been my earnest wish to occasion my Electors as little inconvenience as possible; but my late illness, and the present state of my health, make me despair of ever being again able to attend public business in such a manner as I ought; I have thought it, therefore, most for your service, to resign, without further delay, an office in which I can no longer be of use.

I am, with a truly grateful remembrance of your many past favours,

Gentlemen,

Your most obliged and most obedient

Humble servant,

GEORGE SAVILE.

Paper II.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 10th of December, 1783; with a Letter from Earl FAUCONBERG, and their Answer, annexed.

PRESENT,

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| | Rev. W. MASON, Chairman |
| The Dean of York | Mr. Dring |
| Mr. Croft | Dr. Swainston. |

Read a Letter from Earl Fauconberg, addressed to Stephen Croft, Esq; and resolved on an answer thereto, to be sent in the names of such Gentlemen of the Sub-Committee, now in York, as signed the Requisition to the Chairman of the Committee for the Meeting, now advertised in the York Papers to be held on the 16th instant.

Resolved, That copies of the letter and answer be entered in this book, and also sent by express to Mr. Wyvill and Sir Robert Hildyard; also that the answer be sent by express to Earl Fauconberg.

W. MASON, Chairman.

NEWBURGH, 9th Dec. 1783.

Sir,

THE indignity offered to the County of York, by the application of thirteen Gentlemen to Mr. Wyvill, to call a Meeting of the Association the day previous to that appointed for the nomination of a Member to succeed Sir George Savile, which must be intended to controul the free voice of the Freeholders, is so apparent, that it animates me to determine a resolution, which that day, as a Freeholder and Gentleman of Fortune, I am determined to suggest at the Meeting.

The peace of the County is my most earnest wish; but it is high time the deception that has been circulated should be fairly, honestly, and assiduouſly pointed out.

If, Sir, your name amongst these Gentlemen can influence you to prevent ſo unhandſome an attack on the free voice of the Freeholders of the County, I ſhall be happy; otherwiſe I ſhall eſteem it my duty to call the attention of the County, in which the Conſtitution, and the juſt rights of the Freeholders, will protect me.

No perſonal motives influence me.—I highly reſpect the characters who have aſſociated; and though I differ, I have never interfered.

The honour, dignity, and intereſt of this great, commercial, and extenſive county, calls for an

able and judicious Representative.—Leave it to the zeal and unbiassed choice of the landed interest of the county.

My situation in the county renders me anxious for its credit.—It is not more my duty than my inclination to serve its true interests ; which to no man, or description of men, will I ever sacrifice.

Though I have been so unfortunate as to have lost in you a friend, I still retain a very great personal respect. My sentiments I have honestly declared ; and shall, if my health permits, upon my legs call for the attention of *the Meeting*, if the Meeting of the Association takes place.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

FAUCONBERG.

STEPHEN CROFT, Esq.

My

My Lord,

Mr. Stephen Croft having very properly considered your Lordship's letter as a public one to such of the Members of the Association of Yorkshire as signed the Requisition of the 24th of November to their Chairman, for calling a General Meeting of their Committee on some day previous to the 20th instant, has consulted as many Gentlemen of the Sub-Committee as could be found in York who signed that Requisition.

They whose names are hereunto written are unanimously of opinion, that notwithstanding your Lordship's disapprobation of the measure, they are sufficiently authorised by the County to meet whenever they judge proper; and it is their decided resolution to meet on the day which their Chairman has appointed in the public papers.

They are, with all due respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's obedient servants,

J. FOUNTAYNE,
STEPHEN CROFT,
W. MASON,
JEROM DRING,
A. SWAINSTON,
Wm. WITHERS.

YORK, Dec. 8, 1783.

Earl FAUCONBERG.

Paper III.

Paper III.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 12th of December, 1783; with Earl FAUCONBERG's Reply annexed.

PRESENT,

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Rev. WILLIAM MASON, Chairman. |
| Mr. Dring | Mr. Croft |
| Dr. Swainston | Mr. Withers |
| Rev. Luke Yarker | |

Read, a letter from Earl Fauconberg in reply to the letter to his Lordship, dated yesterday.

Resolved, That his Lordship's letter be entered in the Committee-book, but not answered.
W. MASON, Chairman.

NEWSBAG,

NEWBURGH, December 11, 1783.

Gentlemen,

THE subject of my Letter to Mr. Croft, I acknowledge to be a public one. It is my honest opinion, and in which I feel myself well supported, that the Members of the Association have greatly exceeded the power that they can arrogate to themselves legally, or that the Constitution authorizes.

The Sheriff of the County of York has called a General Meeting of the County, that is to say of the Freeholders, to nominate a proper person to succeed Sir George Savile, when his vacancy shall take place.

I apprehend any Meeting previous thereto, to controul the free voice of the Electors, is a high indignity; on this ground, if I see occasion, I shall, as a Freeholder, make my stand the 17th instant.

Great deference am I ready to pay to the general sense of the Gentlemen Freeholders of the County, but as I from my heart feel this act of the Association (if it should take place) one of the highest infringements of the liberties of the subject, and derogatory of the essential privileges of the People at large, I esteem it my duty to resist.

I am, with all due respect,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

FAUCONBERG.

Paper IV.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 16th of December, 1783; with the Requisition prefixed in compliance with which that Meeting was called.

To the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, Chairman of the Committee of Association for the County of York.

WE, the under-written Members of the said Committee, do request you to call a Meeting of the Committee on some convenient day before the 20th of December next.

NOVEMBER 24, 1783.

**John Yorke,
John Dalton,
A. Swainston,
J. Bourne,
W. Spencer,
Robert Croft,
Thomas Hayes,**

**Will. Danby,
J. Fountayne,
W. Mason,
Jerom Dring,
Stephen Croft,
W. Withers.**

IN

IN obedience to the above Requisition, I do give notice, that a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York will be held at York, on Tuesday the 16th of December, 1783.

C. WYVILL,

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 6, 1783.

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Sir James Norcliffe | Lieutenant-Colonel O'Carroll |
| Mr. Dring | Mr. Tooker |
| Mr. Hayes | Rev. William Mafon |
| Rev. James Wilkinson | Mr. Strickland |
| Mr. Morritt | Mr. Foljambe |
| Sir William Milner | Mr. H. Thompson |
| Mr. Hill | Mr. Arthington |
| Sir George Strickland | Rev. John Robinson |
| Mr. Grimston | Mr. Richard Wilson |
| The Earl of Surrey | The Dean of York |
| Mr. Athorpe | Mr. Croft |
| Mr. Broadley | Mr. Danby |
| Sir Thomas Gascoigne | Dr. Swainston |
| Mr. St. Andrew Ward | Mr. Barlow |
| Mr. Saltmarsh, jun. | Rev. William Dealtry |
| Mr. Yorke | Mr. Marriott |
| Mr. Booth | Rev. John Bourne |
| Mr. Thomas Walker | Lieutenant-Colonel Thorston |
| Rev. Thomas Place | Lord Gallway |
| Mr. Maude | Mr. Lloyd |
| Mr. Rawson | Mr. Dixon |
| Mr. Joseph Walker | Mr. Chaloner |
| Rev. William Comber | General Hale |
| Mr. St. Quintin | Mr. Dalton |
| Mr. Withers | Mr. Farride—elected this day. |
| Mr. Croft, jun. | |

Resolved,

Resolved, That Robinson Farfide, Esq; be added to this Committee.

Resolved unanimously, That this Committee do approve of the Requisition of the Sub-Committee to the Chairman, to call a Meeting of the Committee of Association ; and of the conduct of the Chairman in appointing it on this day.

Resolved unanimously, That the Chairman of this Committee be requested to submit to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, at the General County Meeting to be holden on the 17th of December instant, the propriety of renewing their application to Parliament, for a more fair and equitable Representation of the People, and of instructing their Committee to prepare a Petition for that purpose, to be laid before the Freeholders at the then next ensuing County Meeting, instead of that Meeting proposed to be holden on the 8th day of January next.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned till Thursday morning next, at ten o'clock.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper V.

Proceedings at the General Meeting which nominated F. F. FOLJAMBE, Esq; to represent the County of York in Parliament.

AT a General Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, (who have a right to Vote at the Election of a Knight to serve in Parliament for the said County) held at the Castle of York, in the said County, on Wednesday the 17th day of December, 1783, pursuant to public notice given by the High-Sheriff, for the purpose of nominating a proper person to serve in Parliament for the said County, in the place of Sir GEORGE SAVILE, Bart.

Resolved unanimously,

THAT the warmest acknowledgments of this Meeting be offered to Sir George Savile, Bart. for the assiduity, integrity, and independence of his Parliamentary conduct, signally manifested in his Representation of the County of York during the space of twenty-five years; and that the deepest regret be expressed for that infirm state of his health which has obliged him
to

to resign the important trust he executed with so much credit to himself and advantage to the Public.

Resolved, That the High-Sheriff be requested to transmit the above Resolution to Sir George Savile, Bart. as the unanimous sense of this Meeting.

Resolved, That Francis Ferrand Foljambe, of Aldwarke, in this County, Esq; be put in nomination as a proper person to represent this County in Parliament, in the place of Sir Geo. Savile, Bart.

Resolved, (two only dissentient) That an application to Parliament be renewed by this County for a more fair and equitable Representation of the People.

Resolved unanimously, That Lord Surrey, Lord Fauconberg, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Mason, Mr. Tooker, Mr. Stanhope, and Mr. Wyvill, shall be instructed to prepare a Petition, for the purpose named in the preceding Resolution, to be laid before the Freeholders of this County, for their consideration at the ensuing Meeting of the County.

Resolved unanimously, That the Sheriff be requested to call a Meeting of the Freeholders of this County, to be held on the day of election, (immediately after the choice of a Member) to consider of a Petition to Parliament for a more fair and equitable Representation of the People.

Resolved,

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the High-Sheriff for his impartiality in conducting the business of this day.

ROBERT D'ARCY HILDYARD, Sheriff.

Paper VI.

Debate at a General Meeting of the County of York, on the 17th of December, 1783, called for the purpose of putting in nomination a proper Person for representing the County of York in Parliament, in the room of Sir GEORGE SAVILE, Bart. who had declined that service on account of his ill state of health.

THE General Meeting of the Freeholders of this County, held at the Castle on the 17th of December, 1783, to nominate a proper person to represent this County, in the room of Sir George Savile, Bart. was numerous and respectable.

THE High-Sheriff, having taken the Chair, addressed the Meeting, and called their attention to the business for which they were convened, the nomination of a proper person to represent the County in Parliament, in the room of Sir George Savile, whose virtues, abilities, and services, he made the subject of a just and elegant

elegant panegyric, and concluded by moving, That the warmest acknowledgments of this Meeting be offered to Sir George Savile, Bart. for the assiduity, integrity, and independence of his Parliamentary conduct, signally manifested in his Representation of the County of York, during the space of twenty-five years; and that the deepest regret be expressed for that infirm state of his health which has obliged him to resign the important trust he executed with so much credit to himself and advantage to the Public.

LORD SUMMER next rose, and having first paid his tribute to the eminent worth of Sir George, and expressed what all men felt, the deepest regret for the ill state of health which obliged him to withdraw his Parliamentary services from the County, proceeded to enumerate the qualifications which should be looked for in the man that should be put in nomination to succeed him: an unexceptionable private and domestic character, and where no great public character has been sustained, such unequivocal circumstances as should demonstrate his Public principles. In the first of these no man was more happy than Mr. Foljambe; and of the second he had given such assurances as might render him safely to be relied on, for he had enrolled his name with those of numerous other most respectable Persons associated for the purpose of reforming the defective State of Parliamentary Representation, which his Lordship considered

as the great source of Corruption and all its consequences; he therefore moved, That F. F. Foljambe, of Aldwarke, Esq; be put in nomination.

Mr. STANFORD seconded this motion, and gave, as a farther reason, that Mr. Foljambe being nephew to Sir George Savile, would have the advantage of his sage counsel and experience; and besides this, his being nominated here would pour balm into the bruized frame of that invaluable man.

Mr. CHOLMLEY expressed great respect for Mr. Foljambe, but declared, that as he was a Member of an Association, self-created, who make laws for themselves, and who have declared an intention to make great alterations in the Constitution, which he thought would overturn, or greatly impair it, he would vote against him.

Mr. DRUMMOND declared his disapprobation of Mr. Foljambe, and for much the same reasons. He spoke of the Association with great resentment, and declared them a party which had presumed to take upon themselves to dictate to this County, and to trample on the Rights of the most respectable Men in it. He distinguished the Parliamentary conduct of Sir Geo. Savile with respect to the business of the County, and that of the Public at large; the former he applauded, but disapproved of the latter.

Mr. PEARSON now came forward, and having mentioned the occasion of that Meeting, de-

clared himself aware of the arduous task to which he was now called, and of the necessity there was in these times for activity; that he was therefore resolved to exert himself in their service, if sent to Parliament; and that although he could by no means pretend to the abilities or experience of Sir Geo. Savile, he yet hoped to improve under his friendship and assistance. With respect to the objections brought against him by the two last Gentlemen, that he was a Member of Association, he was so far from denying the fact, that he gloried in having stood foremost in stemming that Torrent of Corruption which had overwhelmed us at home, and had dismembered the Empire by the entire loss of America; he declared that the Gentlemen with whom he had associated, were as respectable and independent a Body of Men as any who should accuse them; congratulated himself and them that they had already done some good, and expressed a sanguine hope that they might yet do more; they had set some bounds already to Corruption, and their farther efforts, he affirmed, were not intended to alter, but to revive the Constitution: A fact, which, with regard to the duration of Parliament, was clear to every man, for it was not so long since they were, by their own authority, extended from three to seven years. He then declared that it was not his intention to offer himself to any Party of Men, but, on the broad basis of the Constitution, which he revered—to the Freeholders

holders of the County at large. He repeated his resolution to set the example of Sir George Savile before him; to imitate it as far as he was able; and hoped, by diligence and attention, to discharge the trust he then solicited, with honesty, and to their satisfaction.

Mr. DUNCOMBE bore testimony to the virtues and abilities of his late Colleague, whose loss he deplored, and whose last political act he declared to have been his support given to Mr. Pitt's motion for the Reform of Parliament; a motion made in consequence of the Petitions of many Counties besides this, which, though respectable on account of its size, was yet far more so on account of the conduct of its Inhabitants, who first called the attention of the Public to the corrupt mismanagement of their Affairs. He then read a Letter from Sir George Savile, in which that excellent man declared an intention, as an individual Constituent, to support, at the election, the person who should be put in nomination at this Meeting.

General HALE, considering the vast power and confidence reposed in Members of Parliament, expressed his wish that an oath of office should be required of them faithfully to discharge their trust, and attend to the Instructions of their Constituents; that they should be bound to the Repeal of all oppressive Laws, of which he enumerated but too many; and to Reform the Corruptions of the Constitution.

and, among those, that greatest grievance, the unequal Representation of the People in Parliament. He approved of Mr. Foljambe.

Colonel THORNTON could not patiently hear the Association, of which he was a Member, accused without proof; he declared that he had never heard any thing drop from the Gentlemen of that Body which was not perfectly Constitutional, and defied any man, who asserted the contrary, to prove his assertion. If the Association had been illegal or unconstitutional, we have lately had a Ministry that would have left no stone unturned to catch at it, which was proof sufficient of its legality.

Mr. STANHOPE again rose, and, in answer to such objections as were made against the Association, declared, that they were so far from being a self-created Body, that they were an appointed Body, and appointed too by the most respectable Meeting of this County that, perhaps, was ever convened; a Meeting to which those Gentlemen, who *now* objected, then gave the sanction of their own attendance; that they had already done some, and, he trusted, they would persevere till they should do more good. He highly applauded both the public principles and well-known private character of Mr. Foljambe.

Mr. WYVILL expressed his hearty approbation of Mr. Foljambe, and then proceeded to call upon Lord Fauconberg to prove the charges which it
had

had appeared to the Committee of Association he had, previous to the Meeting, brought against them, "That they used Deception, and dictated to the County,"—on which

Earl FAUGONBERG came forward, and, tho' he admitted his presence, as a Peer and Lord Lieutenant, would have been improper on the day of election, contended for his right as a Freeholder, to appear and be heard on the day of only putting a Candidate in nomination.—He then averred that he spoke as a Freeholder, and that however Gentlemen might think a Society, called an Association of the County of York, legal, he would venture to say it was not legal, none being so but what the laws of the land authorize; and the laws say, that where a grievance is, the Counties can apply to the Sheriffs to call a Meeting, but the Sheriffs may judge of the propriety and refuse to call; the right of Petitioning however he did not dispute. With respect to Associations, he allowed their possible legality, and exemplified it by that of the Lords and Commons at the time of the Revolution, when the King abdicated the Crown, and threw the Great Seal into the Thames; but could the same necessity be now supposed, when such a head as that of our present Monarch is encircled with the Imperial Crown; a Monarch who, upon the declaration of Parliament, that his own influence had increased, and was increasing, immediately said, "Let the Exces-

sences be lopped off," and afterwards gave his assent that they should be so? He considered the Meeting of the Committee on the preceding day as a controul on the present Proceedings, which he deemed illegal.—He spoke of Sir Geo. Savile with great respect, the loss of whose services he deeply regretted.

Mr. WYVILL declared that his Lordship's reply did not come up to his question; he had asked where were the Deceptions charged against the Association, but not being answered, he had now a right to presume he cannot be answered. With respect to the legality which had been impeached, he begged leave to shew that the word **LEGAL** was not confined only to things required or ordered by Law, for that it equally and more ordinarily signified things permitted by Law; that in a free Meeting this is its necessary meaning, and consequently that a Meeting formed for the purposes of instructing their Representatives, or of agreeing in a Resolution not to support those who will not support the Constitution, is perfectly and strictly legal, otherwise this is not a free Country. He allowed that though an Association is not now so indispensably necessary as at the time of the Revolution, a necessity however subsisted and was apparent; its use was obvious from that very vote in the House of Commons which had been quoted, for it was obtained from that House by the Association. The legality of that Body too, he
said,

said, might appear from another circumstance, the Crown Lawyers had consulted on the means of suppressing it; but, on consultation, did not find it right to proceed against it. With regard to the controul laid to their charge, he declared they had met the day before as usual in all former cases; they had met the day before the Meeting on the last election; that standing, as he and the Committee did, responsible to the County, controul would ill become them; that the nomination of a Candidate was not so much as thought of by the Committee, and therefore that to assert they had met to controul this Meeting is not founded. Mr. Wyvill then proposed a renewal of the County's Petition for a more equal Representation in Parliament.

Lord FAUCONBERG said he had seen Petitions with many names, but few that he knew to be Freeholders or Men of weight; Petitions that stated evils which did not exist; and these he considered as Deceptions. He wished Mr. Duncombe had not been chosen by the means of the Association, as he was a man so perfectly agreeable to every description of persons, that he was certain he would not have had a dissenting voice in the County.—There was, however, his Lordship allowed, one abuse which he could as warmly wish to see reformed as the Association itself, and then declared himself ready to concur in measures for a Reform in Parliament. This moment, he affirmed, requires the assistance of the

the first characters in the County, and if the measure shall ever come to the House where he sits, he gave an assurance that he will there do his duty to the Public, for surely the people are not represented when Members of Parliament are made in private families. The owner himself either sits for a Borough that is his property, or corruptly sells his seat to some person who buys it of him; and venal Boroughs, his Lordship observed, should be made to sink into the Counties, and the Counties should not be represented by only two, their commerce and other business require four or six Members to transact it in Parliament. Instead of maintaining a difference with them, he would give the Association his thanks, if they would bring about a Parliamentary Reform.

Mr. TOOKER was greatly pleased to find that the noble Lord had given his approbation to the principles of the Association, which was formed to produce the very points he wished to see effected: The influence of the Crown had been supported in the House of Commons; it was confessed in that House, and that Resolution by which it was first checked would never have been carried but for our Association, and it is due to our Association that we have seen great characters committed upon great points. He declared the House of Commons not to be the Representatives of the People, they were only the Representatives of Private Families, a
 Seat

Seat in that House was an article of commerce, and now what has Association done? they have never lost sight of this great grievance. He did not expect to hear of a self-created Committee, nor of its illegality; he wished, however, that it might be remarked, that the utmost zeal of their opponents had not been able to object a single fact against that Committee, in any one of their transactions, as a just ground of dissatisfaction; a circumstance amounting to the most honourable acquittal. He declared that on the day before no mention was made in the Committee of a Candidate; professed his pleasure in finding Mr. Foljambe, now proposed, as highly qualified to discharge the trust they were about to repose in him.

Sir W. MILNER highly approved of the Gentleman nominated; he answered Lord Fauconberg's charge, that the Petitions of the County were not signed by many names of weight, by saying that it was a Petition framed in a Meeting in which the greatest number of persons of weight had appeared, that had ever been known to attend at any County Meeting, and that it had been signed by very far the majority of them; he observed that there were present at this time many persons who had heretofore absented themselves, and that as every Meeting of the County was open to them, their not appearing to oppose might justly be considered as a mark of their approbation.

Mr.

Mr. WITHERS justified the conduct of those Gentlemen who signed the Requisition for calling the previous Meeting of the Committee of Association. He declared they had not exceeded their authority, or done any act tending to controul the voice of the Freeholders at the ensuing election. He stated their reasons for calling such previous Meeting, the principal of which was, that the Committee might take into their consideration the propriety of proposing to the County a renewal of their Petition to Parliament at the General Meeting held for the election, instead of deferring that business to the 8th of January.

Mr. DRUMMOND excused his absence, as the Meetings had not the sanction of a call from the High-Sheriff.

Mr. HILL did not consider the presence of the Sheriff as necessary to legalize a Meeting; he supported this opinion by a case in point and judgment upon it. He was happy to hear Lord Fauconberg pledge himself as a friend to the objects of Association, there now subsisted no farther difference than a name between them, and he would willingly meet the noble Lord, if he should address him in the language of the Poet,

*Romeo quit thy name,
And in exchange I'll give thee all myself.*

Mr. DRUMMOND thought a Meeting without

a Sheriff not a County Meeting, but only a Meeting of the Freeholders, who, however, he owned, might meet.—But

Mr. STANHOPE thought the absence of a Sheriff could hardly make a Meeting of all the Freeholders of a County not a County Meeting.

Lord SURREY desired that if any Gentleman had a name to propose, he would do it now, before the question was put on Mr. Foljambe.

Mr. DRUMMOND had no person to propose; he desired, however, not to be considered as acquiescing in Mr. Foljambe's nomination—he would give his negative to prevent the concurrence of the Meeting being unanimous.

Mr. CHOLMELEY agreed with Mr. Drummond.

The question was now put on Mr. Foljambe, and it was resolved, That Francis Ferrand Foljambe, of Aldwarke, in this County, Esq; be put in nomination as a proper person to represent this County in Parliament, in the place of Sir George Savile, Bart.—On which

Mr. FOLJAMBE expressed his warmest gratitude; and declared that, if elected, it should be the study of his life to discharge his duty to his Constituents faithfully and honestly; and concluded with returning his thanks to Lord Surrey who had proposed, and the rest of the Meeting who had supported him.

Mr. WYVILL now rose again, to move the question of which he had previously given notice. He declined resuming the subject of Association,

ciation, as so much had been already said upon it this day; he thought, however, the measures he had to propose, were as necessary on this day as ever they had been; and, if called upon, was ready to enter into the proofs.—He owned, however, that he felt himself in a disagreeable situation as a professional man, and wished to be indulged in saying a few words on that subject, as he very well knew that many persons entertained prejudices against Clergymen who took a part in Public Business. At the beginning of these Meetings he was aware of this, but he was not so much afraid of their censure, as he was desirous of discharging his own duty to the Public; nor could he see that Clergymen who were equally concerned, and had an equal Right with other Freeholders, were liable to blame for standing forward with other Gentlemen in support of what they took to be the interest of their Country, provided they were always attentive to the *integrity* of their principles, the *decency* of their conduct, and the *legality* of the measures in which they engage. That, conscious of his own motives, he had no difficulty to stand forth, and would rest his defence against all such illiberal and narrow censures in a reflection, that he had acted in this whole business as became an *honest and disinterested man*. “If however,” he added, “I shall ever see the grounds of the Association shifted, and measures taken, which, in my judgment, must produce violence and commotion;
or

or if, on the other hand, I shall ever be convinced from the general disposition of the Country, and that of this County in particular, that no good is to be expected from perseverance, I pledge myself to this Meeting that I will retire." He however professed an equally determined resolution, to continue his services, and to co-operate with the County, so long as they continued to him the appointment they had already assigned, and acted in the same manner in which they had heretofore done.

Mr. WYVILL now read his two Propositions; and the first, "For renewing the application of this County to Parliament for a more fair and equal Representation of the People," passed without alteration;—to the second, which moved "To instruct the Committee of Association to prepare a Petition accordingly, to be laid before the next Meeting of the County," and which was seconded by Mr Athorpe,

Lord FAUCONBERG objected—he greatly wished for unanimity in the pursuit of so desirable an object as a Reformation of Parliament, but would not yet acknowledge the Association. He expressed his great satisfaction that his family had derived their highest honours from King William in the very year of the Revolution, and, among many other terms of applause, complimented Lord Surrey in having this day, like an honest man, proposed an honest man (Mr. Foljambe) for the nomination

nomination of this Assembly. He wished for some method in which all might concur.

Mr. WYVILL, therefore, instead of insisting on the particular Committee to be appointed to draw up the Petition, (for which leave had been given) desired that any seven Gentlemen then present might be appointed to prepare and report it to the next Meeting; on which Lord Surrey, Lord Fauconberg, Mr. Strickland, Mr. Mason, Mr. Wyvill, Mr. Tooker, and Mr. Stanhope, were named a Committee for that purpose.

Lord SURREY moved now that the latest possible day might be appointed for the election, as that day would come nearest to the 8th of January, on which the Body of the County had before intended to have met, and consequently the day of election would prove the most convenient substitute for the other, which would thus become unnecessary, as the business designed to be transacted on the 8th, might as well be done then, and time would be thus allowed for a general notice. Lord Surrey was sorry and hurt that Deceptions had been laid to the charge of a Body with which he had acted, and of which he was a Member; but desired it might be remembered that the charge was not proved; and concluded by declaring that if any person should, at any subsequent County Meeting, move to dissolve the Association, he would there oppose the motion with his negative; but that, on the

the contrary, to any motion for its continuance he would give his firm support.

The Sheriff then proposed the 1st day of January, both for the election, and receiving the renewed Petition of the County from the Committee appointed to prepare it, which was agreed to.—After which Lord Fauconberg moved for the thanks of the County to the High Sheriff, which passed unanimously. And thus, in consequence of an opportunity to explain on the one side, and candour sufficient to hear and be convinced on the other, the business of the day, which had at first occasioned a debate of some warmth, was happily concluded in perfect harmony, and with the general satisfaction.

Paper VII.

*Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of
Association of the County of York, on the 18th
day of December, 1783.*

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL., Chairman.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>The Earl of Surrey</i> | <i>Sir James Norcliffe</i> |
| <i>Mr. Dring</i> | <i>Rev. William Mason</i> |
| <i>Mr. Yorke</i> | <i>Rev. James Wilkinson</i> |
| <i>Rev. William Comber</i> | <i>Mr. Foljambe</i> |
| <i>Mr. H. Duncombe</i> | <i>Mr. St. A. Ward</i> |
| <i>Mr. Mountt</i> | <i>Rev. John Bourne</i> |
| <i>Mr. Peirse</i> | <i>Rev. Thomas Place</i> |
| <i>Rev. John Robinson</i> | <i>Mr. Croft</i> |
| <i>Sir Thomas Galcoigne</i> | <i>Mr. Strickland</i> |
| <i>Mr. Lloyd</i> | <i>Dr. Swamston</i> |
| <i>Rev. William Dealtry</i> | <i>Mr. Farfide</i> |
| <i>Mr. Tooker</i> | <i>Mr. Withers</i> |
| <i>Mr. Courtney</i> | |

Resolved, That an advertisement be inserted in the papers, signed by Mr. Gray, giving notice to the Freeholders of the County of York, that the intended call of the Freeholders of Yorkshire, on the 8th day of January next, to meet and deliberate on the propriety of renewing their application to Parliament for a more fair and equitable Representation of the People, will not take place, the Meeting of the County of
York,

Yerk, held on the 17th instant, having rendered it unnecessary, by requesting the Sheriff to call a Meeting on the 1st of January, 1784, for that purpose.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned to the 31st day of December instant.

C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Paper VIII.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 31st of December, 1783.

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

Sr Thomas Gascoigne
Mr. Hill
Mr. Micklethwaite
Rev. Luke Yarker
Mr. Croft, jun.
Rev. William Mason
Mr. Lloyd
Mr. P. Milnes
Mr. James Milnes
Mr. Courtney
Mr. Dring
Rev. John Robinson
Mr. J. Milnes, jun.
Mr. R. S. Milnes
Mr. Withers
Lieutenant Col. O'Carroll
Mr. Shore
Mr. Athorpe

Mr. Farside
Dr. Spencer
Mr. Anderson
Dr. Swainston
The Earl of Surrey
The Earl of Easingham
Sir William Milner
The Dean of York
Mr. Chaloner
Mr. Danby
Mr. Childers
Mr. Foljambe
Rev. James Wilkinfon
Sir James Norcliffe
Mr. Tooker
Rev. Robert Croft
Mr. Rawfon

Read the following Draught of a second Report to the County of York of the Proceedings of this Committee. *

Resolved unanimously, That the Draught now read be adopted as the Report of this Committee; and that such Report be presented by their Chairman at the Meeting of this County, appointed by the Sheriff to be held to-morrow.

Resolved unanimously, That the Chairman be requested to move at the County Meeting of to-morrow, the continuance of this Committee with its former powers.

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned till Friday the 2d day of January next, at ten o'clock.

C. WYVILL.

* For this Report, see page 311.

Paper IX.

Proceedings *at the Meeting which elected F. F. FOLJAMBE, Esq; to represent the County of York in Parliament.*

AT a General Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held at the Castle of York, on Thursday the 1st day of January, 1784, in pursuance of notice given by the Sheriff, agreeable to the Requisition of the Freeholders of the said County at a Public Meeting held at the same place the 17th day of December last,

(Mr. Foljambe having been first unanimously elected)

THE Earl of SURREY presented the following Petition, prepared by the Committee of seven Gentlemen appointed for that purpose at the last County Meeting.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain
in Parliament assembled.*

**The Humble Petition of the Freeholders of the
County of York.**

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners, sensible of the original excellence of the Constitution of this Country, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the genuine principles on which it was founded.

Your Petitioners further shew, That it is necessary to the welfare of the People that the Commons' House of Parliament should have a common interest with the nation; and that, in the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, the Commons of this Realm are partially and inadequately represented, and consequently cannot have that security for their liberties which it is the aim of the Constitution to give them.

Your Petitioners therefore again renew their earnest supplications to this Honourable House, to take into their most serious consideration the present inadequate state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, and to apply such remedy to this great constitutional Evil, as to this Honourable House may seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

The

The foregoing Petition being read, it was

Resolved, (with only four dissents) That the Petition, now read, be signed by the Sheriff, and any of the Freeholders present who approve thereof, on behalf of themselves and the other Freeholders of this County.

The second Report of the Committee of Association for this County being presented by their Chairman, the Rev. Christopher Wyvill.

Resolved, That the same be now read, and the same being read accordingly,

Resolved, (with only four dissents) That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that the Committee of Association be continued for the purposes of promoting such legal measures as may tend to obtain a more adequate Representation of the People, and a shorter duration of Parliament; reduce the influence of the Crown within proper bounds; and restrain the too lavish expenditure of Public money.

Resolved, (with only four dissents) That the Committee of Association be required to request the Sheriff, for the time being, to call a General Meeting of this County when it shall seem expedient; and when the Sheriff shall not comply with such request, that the Chairman of the Committee do call such Meeting in pursuance of the powers heretofore delegated to them.

Resolved, That the Representatives for this County be requested to present to Parliament the Petition agreed to and signed this day.

Resolved unanimously, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that some public testimony should be given of the high approbation in which this County holds the eminently-able and disinterested services of Sir George Savile, Bart. during a laborious attendance of twenty-five successive years in Parliament, as a Representative for this County.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to determine upon a proper Plan for effecting the purpose of the last Resolution, and that they be desired to be prepared with a design accordingly, to present to the Gentlemen of this County at the ensuing Assizes.

Resolved, That the following gentlemen shall compose the Committee, viz. Sir W. Milner, S. Croft, Esq; W. Danby, Esq; Lieut. Col. Thornton, Lieut. Col. O'Carroll, S. F. Barlow, Esq; R. Sinclair, Esq; J. Parker, Esq; and the Rev. T. Place.

R. D. HILDYARD, Sheriff.

Paper X.

The Second Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association of the County of York, presented to the General Meeting of the County of York, held on the 1st day of January, 1784.

THE Committee of Association feel it to be their duty on the present occasion, few as their transactions have been since their re-appointment by this County on the 19th day of December, 1782, to state to their Constituents what those transactions have been.

ON the 20th of December, 1782, the Committee, having given orders for circulating the Petition for a more equal Representation, which had been adopted by the General Meeting of the County of York on the preceding day, in order to take the sense of the Freeholders of this extensive County upon the subject as completely as possible, declared unanimously their resolution to execute the trusts reposed in them by the County with unremitting attention

attention and zeal; and on the 21st of the same month adjourned, subject to a call by the Subcommittee, or the Chairman, at the requisition of five Members of the Committee

On the 1st of October, 1783, the Committee having been called together by the Chairman at the requisition of five Members; resolved, according to the usual practice, to thank the Right Hon. William Pitt for his excellent Propositions submitted to Parliament on the 7th of May, towards accomplishing a substantial Redress of Parliamentary abuses; to thank the two worthy Members of this County, and the other Hon. Members of the House of Commons, by whom Mr. Pitt's Propositions on the 7th of May had been supported; and also proceeded to declare their opinion, that the rejection of those Propositions on the 7th of May may chiefly be imputed to the operation of that ruinous political system, by which the Civil War with America had been lighted up; the British Empire dismembered; and the Plan of Parliamentary seduction carried to its last fatal extreme: And it was also considered by the Committee, that the re-admission of the abettors of such a system into power, was a most formidable obstacle to the necessary renovation of the Constitution. But exhorting the People of Britain not to despair of the Public weal, nor from an indiscriminate distrust of Public Men to sink into abject supineness, and a neglect of those legal means of
defence

defence by which the Constitution may yet be preserved, they called on every friend to the peace and freedom of the nation, by vigorous and lawful efforts, to support the Reformation of Parliament, and, confiding in the Public spirit and unabated zeal of the Freeholders of the County of York, proposed a Meeting of the County on the 8th of January, 1784, in order to represent to Parliament, if that should be thought expedient, in decent, but firm and manly terms of expostulation, the necessity for an effectual Restoration of the Constitution.

The Committee, having been adjourned on the 2d of October, 1783, met by a call of the Chairman on the 16th of December, 1783, and directed him to submit to the Freeholders at the County Meeting on the 17th of December, the propriety of renewing their application to Parliament for a more equitable Representation of the People at this County Meeting, instead of that proposed to be holden on the 8th of January, 1784. Which Proposition having been agreed to by the County on the 17th of December, it was resolved at the adjourned Meeting of the Committee, on the 18th of December, to countermand the intended call of the County on the 8th of January next.

To this circumstantial narrative of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association, since their re-appointment on the 19th of December, 1782, they wish to subjoin a few short remarks, which

which they submit with the utmost deference to the judgment of their Constituents: And first they beg leave to observe, That although Mr. Pitt's Propositions on the 7th of May were negatived by a large majority in a full House of Commons, yet this circumstance ought not to discourage the County of York, because few, if any, of that majority denied the inequality of that Representation complained of in your Petition; therefore, from the Justice of Parliament, notwithstanding the opposition of corrupt, interested, or too suspicious Men, Redress may be expected on a future application: that the manly persevering spirit of the People may awe the corrupt and interested; and their steady constancy and prudence convince the honest, but too suspicious part of their opponents, that their apprehensions of new and extravagant demands, to be grounded on the just and reasonable concessions of Parliament, are unsupported by any probable presumption drawn from the general temper of the County of York, or the Friends of Reformation in other parts of the kingdom.

But the Committee own and lament that the respectable Senators who supported your question on the 7th of May, are not connected by any bond of political union, and that for near two years there has been a fluctuation of Power, and a distracted state of our National Councils, peculiarly unfortunate to the Empire in its present weak and exhausted condition; but, mischievous

chievous as these dissensions may be in many regards, they may produce beneficial effects respecting the great business of Parliamentary Reform, which may more than counterbalance those evil consequences: for a little consideration may serve to evince to unprejudiced men, that where such distraction of counsels subsists there must be something disordered, something essentially wrong in the present state of the Constitution. Under a preceding Administration stability had indeed been obtained for many years; but it was obtained by odious and detestable means, and prolonged to the disgrace and ruin of the Empire. Since that period there may have been wisdom, there may have been integrity, but there has been no permanence in the Cabinet. To give stability to Government on principles worthy of honest Men, either to govern or to be governed by, the sound part of our Representation must be reinforced; if not, there is but too much reason to apprehend that Revolution may succeed Revolution, till the nation, tired of perpetual animosities and the conflict for Power, may irrevocably plunge into the vortex of Corruption, or, more wretched still, shelter itself under the stern protection of Despotism: Allowing, therefore, to the most cautious man, that there is always some danger to be dreaded from innovation. He must now admit, in his turn,
that

that greater, infinitely greater mischiefs may result from the acquiescence of the nation under the multiplied abuses of its present defective Representation. That the late vicissitudes of Power may have made impressions like these on many minds in different parts of this kingdom, you have some reason to conclude, from your own recent experience in this County; as many persons, formerly averse to your measures, have now, from a conviction of their propriety, acceded to them. If a similar conviction has taken place in other Counties in any great degree, your application to Parliament will be renewed with additional weight, and a fairer prospect of success.

But if these encouraging appearances should prove fallacious; if from indolence, groundless jealousy, or as groundless despair, you should be ill-supported by the People at large; if your Petition should be rejected by Parliament, and Corruption should still prevail against the interests of the Country and the Friends of the Constitution, yet, even then think not the cause of your country will be irrecoverably lost: For the generous spirit of our nation remains unimpaired; it still holds in abhorrence whatever is base and dishonourable. Corruption, in public as in private characters, must ever be the scorn and detestation of the virtuous; they must, therefore, approve the object of these Meetings.

Meetings, and the necessity of popular interference must to them become more and more apparent: But what the wise and virtuous with a general concurrence approve and require, cannot long be withheld by an interested majority.

But if the worst should happen, and the mass of the nation should become so corrupted that Reformation should be alike incompatible with the vices of those who govern, and of those who are governed, YOU will have one consolation left, the best, if not the only comfort which the miserable state of your Country would then admit; you will have acted with a noble consistency of conduct; you will have done your duty to the Public.

Paper XI.

Resolution at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 2d of January, 1784; with a Resolution annexed at a Meeting of the Sub-Committee of Association of the County of York, on the 16th of January, 1784.

P R E S E N T,

Rev. C. WYVILL, Chairman.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mr. Chaloner | Mr. Tooker |
| Mr. Shore | Lord Effingham |
| Mr. James Milnes, jun. | Rev. John Robinson |
| Mr. Dalton | Mr. Dring |
| Sir James Norcliffe | Rev. William Mason |
| Mr. R. S. Milnes | Lieutenant-Colonel O'Carroll |
| Lieutenant-Colonel Thornton | Mr. Farfide |
| Mr. Dixon | Mr. Croft, jun. |
| Mr. Withers | Mr. Wilton |
| Rev. James Wilkinfon | |

Resolved, That this Committee be adjourned subject to a call by the Chairman, on the requisition of any five Members.

C. WYVILL.

YORK TAVERN, Jan. 16, 1784.

PRESENT,

Rev. WILLIAM MASON, Chairman.

Rev. Robert Croft

Lieutenant Col. O'Carroll.

Resolved, That copies of the Second Report of the Proceedings of the Committee of Association, be transmitted by Mr. Gray, as under-mentioned, viz.—

One copy to each Member of the Corporation of the City of London, to be transmitted to Mr. Rix.

One Copy to the Chief Magistrate of each Corporation in the County of York.

Five copies to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

Five copies to the Lord Provost of Glasgow.

Ten copies to Dr. Jebb, Westminster.

Ten copies to T. Brand Hollis, Esq.

Ten copies to Mr. John Churchill,—and

Five copies to Dr. Rotherham, Newcastle.

W. MASON, Chairman.

Paper XII.

List of the Members of the Committee of Association, who, since the Meeting on the 2d day of January, 1784, have ordered their Names to be withdrawn from that List by the Clerk.

| <i>Names.</i> | <i>When and how ordered to be struck out.</i> |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Robert Lumb, Esq; | } 11th March 1784, by Letter. |
| Thomas Lumb, Esq; | |
| James Farrer, Esq; | } In March 1784, personally. |
| S. F. Barlow, Esq; | |
| William Baynes, Esq; | } 30th March 1784, at Bluit's, by direction of James Farrer, Esq; (the Dean of York, Sir Tho. Gascoigne and Mr. Dring being all present.) |
| Stephen Croft, Esq; | |
| Stephen Croft, jun. Esq; | |
| John Carr, Esq; | |
| Rev. Mr Cookson | |
| Jerom Dring, Esq; | |
| F. F. Poljanbe, Esq; | |
| Benjamin Ferrand, Esq; | |
| Rev. Dr. Fountayne, Dean of York | |
| William Gasforth, Esq; | |
| Sir Tho. Gascoigne, Bart. | |
| Thomas Hill, Esq; | |
| General Hale | |
| Sir William Milner, Bart. | |
| Pemberton Milnes, Esq; | |
| Sir John Ramsden, Bart. | |
| Rev. Richard Sykes | |
| Lieut. Col. Thornton | |
| Peregrine Wentworth, Esq; | |
| St. Andrew Ward, Esq; | } March 30, by Letter. |
| Richard Wilson, Esq; | |
| Rev Henry Zouch | |
| Rev. John Carver | |
| Rev. Robert Croft | |
| William Bagshaw, Esq; | } March 31, personally. |
| Rev. John Preston | |
| Dr. Swainston | } April 1, by Mr. Shore's order. |
| | |
| | } ——— personally. |
| | |
| | } April 3, by Letter. |
| | |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Thomas Weddell, Esq; | April 12, by Letter. |
| Rev. John Michell | April 27, by Letter. |
| William Buck, Esq; | May 6, by Letter. |
| Thomas Willis, Esq; | } August 25, by Letter. |
| Rev. W. Gawthorpe | |
| William Strickland, Esq; late of Be- | } Oct. 20, by direction of his agent |
| verley | |
| G. Oibaldeston, Esq; Hutton Bushell | Mr. Hall. |
| Rev. Thomas Zouch | March 12, 1785, by Letter. |
| Thomas Wolrich, Esq; | } May 20, 1786, by memorandum |
| David Stansfeld, Esq; | |
| | from W. Brown. |
| | } June 2, 1786, by Letter. |
| | } October 1786, in consequence of his |
| | |
| Obadiah Dawson, Esq; | declaring to Mr. Thorpe, (who |
| | waited upon him for his subscrip- |
| | tion) that he had long ago de- |
| | clined. |
| | N. B. I have no minute or recol- |
| | lection of any such intention be- |
| | ing communicated to me. |
| | W. O. |
| George Woodhead, Esq; | } January 1787, (when called upon |
| | for his subscription by H. Tem- |
| | ple, Clerk to Graves and Gray) |
| | when he said he never considered |
| | himself as a Member of the Com- |
| | mittee, but only as an Agent. |

Paper XIII.

An alphabetical List of the Members of the Committee of Association for the County of York, previous to the Secession of Members in the Year 1784.

A Rmytage Sir Geo. Bart. *Kirklee.*
 Anderson Sir W. Bt. *Kildwilt.*
 Athorpe R. A. Esq; *Dunnington*
 Anderson John Esq; *Swainthorpe*
 Arthington Thomas Esq; *Arthington*

B

Bell Ralph Esq; *Thirsk*
 Burne Rev. Mr. *Charter House, Hull*
 Barlow S. F. Esq; *Middlethorpe*
 Baynes John Esq; *Embsay Kirk*
 Booth John Esq; *Bruss House*
 Baynes William Esq; *Embsay Kirk*
 Buck William Esq; *Halifax*
 Broadley Isaac Esq; *Brantingham*
 Battle William Esq; *Wilton*
 Bagshaw William Esq; *Coates Hall*

C

Chaloner William Esq; *Guisborough*
 Croft Stephen Esq; *York*
 Croft Stephen, jun. Esq; *Stillington*
 Cradock Sheldon Esq; *Hartforth*
 Carver Rev. Mr. *Winstone*
 Cayley Rev. Mr. *Durton Agnes*
 Comber Rev. Mr. *Kirkstreeside*
 Carr John Esq; *York*
 Childers C. W. Esq; *Cantley Lodge*
 Courtney John Esq; *Beverley*
 Croft Rev. Mr. *Hayton*
 Coghill Sir John Bart. *Cogbill Hall*
 Clay Joseph Esq; *Bridge Houses*
 Cookson Rev. Mr. *Mirfield*
 Cotton Thomas Esq; *Haigh Hall*

D

Duncombe C. S. Esq; *Duncombe P.*
 Duncombe Henry Esq; *Cesgrave*
 Dalton John Esq; *Steningford*
 Doddsworth Rev. Mr. *Wattias*
 Dring Jerom Esq; *York*
 Dealtry Rev. Mr. *Skirpenbeck*
 Dixon Rev. Mr. *Worborough*
 Dixon John Esq; *Gledhow*
 Dade Rev. Mr. *Barmston*
 Dawson Obadiah Esq; *Leeds*
 Dalton Rev. Mr. *Harrogate*
 Danby William Esq; *Swinton*

E

Elsley Greg. Esq; *Patrick Brompton*
 Edmunds Francis Esq; *Worborough*
 Edingham Earl of

F

Foljambe F. F. Esq; *Aldwark*
 Ferrand Benjamin Esq; *St. Ives*
 Farrer James Esq; *Barmston Grange*
 Fountayne Rev. Dr. *Dean of York*
 Foord Barnard Esq; *West Heslerton*
 Foljambe John Esq; *Retherham*
 Penton William jun. Esq; *Underbank*
 Ferrars Lord de, *Ryby Park*
 Fenwick Thomas Esq; *Burrow*
 Frankland Thomas Esq; *Stokely*

G

Garforth William Esq; *Wigginsthorpe*
 Grimston Thomas Esq; *Kilnwick*

Gawthorpe Rev. Mr. *Sedburgh*
Galway Ld. Vise. *Allerton Mauleverer*
Gatcigne Sir Tho. Bart. *Parlington*

H

Hill Thomas Esq; *Tadcaster*
Hale General, *Plantation*
Horton Sir Watts, Bart. *Chadderton*
Hildyard Sir R. D. Bart. *Sedbury*
Harrison William Esq; *Orgrave*
Harrison Esq. William, *Orgrave*
Hayes Thomas Esq; *Aislaby*

I

Iackson Ralph Esq; *Normanby*
Jackson William Esq; *Wath*

L

Lafelles L. S. Esq; *Spennithorne*
Legard Sir John Bart. *Ganton*
Lloyd Gamaliel Esq; *Leeds*
Lodge Edmund Esq; *Willow Hall*
Luslon Rev. Mr. *West Witton*
Lumb Robert Esq; *Wakefield*
Lumb Thomas Esq; *Wakefield*
Legard Henry Esq; *Beverley*

M

Muritt J. S. Esq; *Rokeby Park*
Malpas Pemberton Esq; *Wakefield*
Miles James Esq; *Wakefield*
Miles James jun. Esq; *Wakefield*
Miles John Esq; *Wakefield*
Miles Richard Slater Esq; *Wakefield*
Miles Richard Esq; *Flockton*
Mason Rev. Mr. *Aston*
Mason Sir Wm. Bart. *Nun Appilton*
Mellor Rev. Mr. *Thornhill*
Merritt Randolph Esq; *Leazes*
Moude Francis Esq; *Leadbicly*
Mathews John Esq; *Whitby*
Micklethwaite John Esq; *Leeds*
Moul R. Wyld Esq; *Wickersley*

N

Norcliffe Sir James, Bart. *Langton*

O

Osbaldeston H. B. Esq; *Hornamby*
Osbaldeston G. Esq; *Hutton Busfield*

P

Pool Charles Esq; *Hull*
Parker John Esq; *Woodthorpe*
Preston Rev. Mr. *Asham-Bryan*
Place Thomas Esq; *Greenhammerton*
Peirce Henry Esq; *Bedale*

Q

Quintin St. M. C. Esq; *York*
Quintin St. Sir Wm. Bart. *Scampston*

R

Robinson Rev. Mr. *York*
Rawson Thomas Esq; *Wardensland*
Ramden Sir John Bart. *Byrom*

S

Strickland William Esq; *Welburn*
Smith J. S. Esq; *Newland*
Strickland William Esq; *Beverley*
Smyth Francis Esq; *New Building*
Smyth John Esq; *Heath*
Swainston Allen M.D. *York*
Stacy Rev. Mr. *Bullfield*
Strickland Sir Geo. Bart. *Boynston*
Stovin James Esq; *Whitegate-Hall*
Sykes Richard Esq; *Hull*
Shore Samuel Esq; *Norton*
Shore John Esq; *Sheffield*
Saltmarsh Philip jun. Esq; *Saltmarsh*
Shepherd Francis Esq; *Knarsborough*
Stansfield David Esq; *Leeds*
Shuttleworth Rev. Mr. *Kirkstallham*
Spencer William M. D. *York*
Sayle Benjamin Esq; *Wentbridge*
Surrey Earl of

T

Tooker Samuel Esq; *Moorgate*
Thornton Lieut. Col. *Thornhill*
Thompson Esq. T. Esq; *Karey Hall*
Turner Sir Charles Bt. *Kirkstallham*

W

Wyvill Rev. Mr. *Constable Burton*
Wubers William Esq; *York*
Wilkinson Rev. Mr. *Sheffield*
Wentworth P. Esq; *Foxley Lodge*
Ward St. A. Esq; *Lawton, Leicestershire*

Wilson William Esq; *Ayton*
Weddell Thomas Esq; *Waddow*
Walker Samuel Esq; *Rotherham*
Walker Jonathan Esq; *Rotherham*
Walker Joseph Esq; *Rotherham*
Walker Joshua Esq; *Rotherham*
Walker Thomas Esq; *Rotherham*
Wilson Richard Esq; *Leeds*
Woodhead George Esq; *Sheffield*
Wormley Edward Esq; *Riccall*
Walker Rev. Mr. *Northallerton*
Waines William Esq; *Little Weton*

Wolrich Thomas Esq; *Leeds*
Willis ——— Esq; *Sedburgh*
Warner William Esq; *Fogson*

Y

Yarker Rev. Mr. *Leyburn*
Yarker John Esq; *Leyburn*
Yorke John Esq; *Richmond*

Z

Zouch Rev. Mr. *Sandall*
Zouch Rev. Mr. *Wycliffe* *

NUMBER XIV.

Paper I.

Proceedings of the General Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held at the Castle of York, on the 25th of March, 1784.

AT a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held at the Castle of York, on Thursday the 25th of March, 1784, in pursuance of advertisements repeatedly published by the Sheriff of the said County, in consequence of a Requisition to him, signed by upwards of one hundred respectable Freeholders, to call a General Meeting for the purpose of addressing the Throne on the present alarming aspect of Public affairs,

WILLIAM DANBY, Esq; Sheriff, in the Chair,

The following Address was proposed by Mr. BUCK, and seconded by Sir CHRIST. SYKES, Bart.

To the KING's most excellent MAJESTY.

May it please your Majesty,

WE your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Freeholders of the County of York, alarmed at the present distracted state of Public affairs, beg leave to approach your Throne with assurances of our unfeigned and zealous attachment to your Majesty's Person and Government.

Convinced that the very existence of our excellent Constitution depends on the preservation of the due balance of Power wisely placed in the different branches of the Legislature, we declare ourselves equally solicitous to maintain the legal Prerogatives of the Crown, and the just Privileges of the two Houses of Parliament.

We cannot too strongly reprobate the late attempt to seize the property and violate all the chartered Rights of the East-India Company; the enormous patronage of which would have produced an influence equally destructive of the Prerogative of the Crown and the Liberties of the People.

To remove Ministers, who made such an attempt, we deem to be a just exertion of your Majesty's Prerogative; and, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, we think your Majesty acted with equal justice, by retaining your present Ministers, until an appeal to your People could be made. Imperfect as such an appeal to
the

the Constituent Body must ever be, under the present manifold defects of our National Representation, we still conceive the calling of a New Parliament to be the only true Constitutional Measure which your Majesty in your Royal wisdom can adopt to settle the present differences, between the several branches of the Legislature.

After a debate thereon, and the question put, whether the said Address should pass as the act of this Meeting or not, upon the shew of hands a considerable majority appeared to be in favour of the Address proposed:—But a division being demanded, the same immediately took place, and upon that division the Sheriff could not take upon himself to determine.

It was then alleged to be, and assumed as, a necessary consequence of the Sheriff's determination in the mode above stated, that the said Address should be signed by him as the act of the Meeting.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the High-Sheriff for his impartial conduct in the business of the day.

Mr. Wilson (of Pontefract) then moved, and Major Pulleyne seconded the motion, That the Sheriff should be requested to present the said Address; which, upon the question being put, passed in the affirmative by a great majority.

WILLIAM DANBY, Sheriff.

Paper II.

*Account of the Debate at the Meeting at York,
on the 25th day of March, 1784.*

THE names of the Gentlemen being called over at whose request the Meeting was convened, any one of them was desired to give their reasons for such requisition; upon which

Mr. BUCK (Recorder of Leeds) rose and said, I wish the question which is to be agitated this day had never existed, but had been left at rest. I hope Gentlemen will confine themselves to the immediate point, viz. A question between a majority of the House of Commons and the Crown in regard to the Prerogative of appointing Ministers. Some may carry it to the extremes of the Proposition; first, Whether the House of Commons has an absolute power to controul the Crown in the appointment of Ministers: *That* would be very dangerous; it would be destroying the balance of our Constitution, and, as has been well said, would be taking the Crown off his Majesty's head, and putting it under the Mace of the House of Commons. On the other hand, when the House constitutionally calls on the Crown to exercise that

Prerogative

Prerogative in a particular manner, and is supported by the People, if such a call should be rejected, there would be equal danger; but the question now is, Whether the House of Commons should be supported by their Constituents, when they find fault with the Crown, for dismissing Ministers who were thought to act from interested motives, and who attempted to introduce a new and formidable Power? His Majesty, in the due exercise of his Prerogative, chuses other Ministers. Before any thing is done by them, the House of Commons think fit to advise his Majesty to dismiss them. This is the first act; the root of the whole contest that has followed. We are then to consider whether the House of Commons is right or wrong. Has not the King the Executive Government? Most undoubtedly he has. But, it is said, the Ministers he appoints must have the *previous* confidence of the House of Commons, and *they* are to point them out. Is not this assuming the Executive Government? Sir, the Constitution of this Country has said, the House of Commons shall not have the Executive Government. If then they are claiming that to which they have no right, they ought not to be supported by their Constituents, who are interested to maintain the balance of the Constitution. There is another ground, Sir, if it is fixed that the Crown *must* comply with the Réquisitions of the House of Commons, the People cannot be heard with

with any effect. I maintain they have a right to differ from their Representatives. It has been said that the voice of the People can be heard only by their Representatives: I trust that Proposition will prove as abortive as it is wicked. I trust the voice of the People shall ever be heard, and they shall ever have in their power to check the ambition of their Representatives. Sir, upon this occasion the House of Commons *have heard* the voice of their Representatives, but *have* disregarded it. The House of Commons, when the People are *with* them, can *compel* the Crown to agree to their Requisitions: They can refuse the supplies; they can disband the army. This the present House of Commons threatened to do, but *knowing* the People to be against them, they *durst* not do it. They have abandoned the strong holds which the Constitution allows them. Thinking then these Proceedings of the House of Commons unconstitutional, I signed this Requisition. It is but my own private opinion, I do not find fault with Gentlemen who may have a different opinion, and I shall submit to the majority of the County, after the sense of this Meeting is fairly taken. Every man in this country should have his opinion. It is manly to come forth and avow it; therefore, Sir, I move for the following Address to his Majesty, which I and several other Gentlemen are of opinion, contains the sentiments which should be expressed at this very important crisis.

The

The Address being now delivered to the Under-Sheriff, was read by him to the Meeting. *

Sir C. SYKES seconded the motion.

Mr. DRUMMOND then rose and declared, that he regretted that he felt himself obliged to object to an Address that began in such moderate and constitutional language, but as the latter part of it was so inconsistent with the former, so full of party spirit and extraneous matter, he must express his hearty disapprobation of it. He was fully convinced that it could tend only to increase the heated temper of the times, to warp the judgment and divert the attention from the two great objects in the mind of every honest, independent, unbiassed Man, The support of the Three Branches of the Legislature in their just and equal balance, and that Union of Parties which he firmly believed to be the real wish of the whole kingdom.—He declared himself unconnected with any party, wishing, at all times, to consider Public Men and Measures as abstracted from Party as possible, and to judge of them by the purest and soundest principles of the Constitution.—He ever had been, and ever should be, as firm and staunch a Friend to the just Rights of the Crown as any Man; he had shewed himself so on a former occasion, when he thought that Power encroached upon, and never would desert his principles: But he never
could

* For this Address, see page 326.

could support any one branch of the Legislature at the expence of either of the other two;—at the expence of the Constitution. He never could approve of so dangerous a precedent as the **DISREGARD OF PARLIAMENT**; a precedent totally unknown since the glorious æra of the Revolution. He never could approve of any Minister standing against the declared sense of the House of Commons, resting his foot on the extreme Rights of the Prerogative, and challenging the extreme Rights of Parliament. The House of Commons had not, and he trusted never would assume the Rights of the Crown of appointing or dismissing Ministers; but they had an undoubted Right over their own conduct, either to place their confidence, or to express their want of confidence in any Minister, when appointed, and to advise the Crown in the Exercise of its Rights; otherwise absolute Monarchy would be at once established in this kingdom, and Parliament assembled merely to register the Royal Edicts.—He did not presume to censure any Man's principles or sentiments; but he could not help expressing his surprize that those who were foremost in opposing the influence of the Crown, were now the greatest advocates for that very influence, and for a power that never has been exercised since the Revolution. He thought matters driven to a very delicate and critical point, which he heartily wished had never been tried; but was thoroughly convinced that the honour

honour and dignity of the Crown, and liberty and security of the People, depended wholly on the equipoise of the Three Estates of the Realm, and that whenever any one branch of the Legislature gains that ascendancy, so as to overrule either of the other two, the Constitution becomes wounded, and the Country, sooner or later, will feel the wound. In the gracious hands in which the supreme Power is lodged at present, he was confident the Rights and Liberties of the People would ever be safe, and the Public Good would ever be the great and only object of that Power; but in the establishment of so dangerous a precedent as that of the present day, when we behold the authority, and dignity, and sense of Parliament disregarded and over-ruled, who can answer for the consequences thereof?—He lamented the sad distracted State of the Kingdom, and the stagnation of all Public Business at a most momentous crisis, and every attempt to union baffled. He urged that union had been strongly recommended by Parliament, had been judged expedient by his Majesty, had been expressed on all sides as the wish of the whole nation; it notwithstanding has been impeded by the ambition, the interest, the obstinacy, and the prejudices of Individuals. He declared that he thought the two great contending Parties too powerful for each other, and irreconcilable of themselves; that without an Union no firm Administration could be formed; that it was, therefore, the wisdom

wisdom of every moderate and independent Man, free from every bias or prejudice, to take every measure that may promote that Union, and oppose every one that may obstruct it.—He should have thought it better if neither the India Affairs, nor any other public measure had been introduced in the business of the present day, as they only biased and inflamed men's minds; but as they had been introduced, he would shortly give his humble, but honest and deliberate, opinion of the first India Bill.—He held Charters as sacred as any Man, but could never esteem them in all cases and contingencies absolutely irrevocable; and when the revocation was to pass under the Public Eye, through an act of the whole Legislature, and not be carried into execution by any secret or arbitrary Power, he could never condemn a Man for proposing such a Measure, even if he did not approve of the Principle of it: But he declared he did agree in the principle of it, and was happy in the voice of a great majority in the House of Commons as a sanction to his opinion. He looked upon the first Bill, though a bold yet necessary measure, and the best that had yet been proposed. He considered the second Bill as weak and defective, liable to the evil consequences of inefficacy, division, and irresponsibility, and more likely to promote than check the evils complained of. He thought any one that had read or knew the black catalogue of evils.

evils, of cruelty, injustice, rapine, and oppression committed by the East-India Company, of weakness and mismanagement in every one of their Councils and Measures, of the incompetency of the very frame of their Constitution, would scarcely ever wish that the sanction of a Charter should be made a shield to weak and wicked oppressors, and the means of trampling on the Rights of Mankind. He thought, therefore, humanity, justice, and policy required a revocation of the present Charter, and he should not consider the chartered Right of any other Corporate Body less safe by the passing of such an Act, than the lives and properties of the subject by the forfeiture of those who had lost them by their crimes and misdemeanors.—He repeated his disapprobation of the wild schemes of Parliamentary Reform which had been proposed by the modern State Empirics: That when it was introduced, rather by surprize, at a late County Meeting by a Reverend Gentleman, he had declared that disapprobation, but would not so far stand on his own opinion as to obstruct the Petition going to Parliament, as he thought it better it should be discussed and decided on there, than that it should float in the minds of the multitude, and be so perpetually debated on in every vague assembly that the caprice of individuals should think proper to call. Parliament had repeatedly, and by great majorities, decided against the measure; it there-

VOL. II. Y fore

fore behoved the People to be satisfied, and abide by the decision of their Representatives in the great Council of the Nation.

Mr. H. DUNCOMBE said, the favourite doctrine of the day is Union; I have a great regard for those who have attempted it, and I should wish to have my name enrolled under their description, *independent Country Gentlemen*. An attempt has been made to destroy the equipoise of the Constitution: I venerate the just Prerogative of the Crown, as much as I am an advocate for the Rights of the People. The late Resolutions of the House of Commons had my negative, as containing many conclusions from wrong premises: The honour and dignity of Parliament! fanciful honour, and dignity ill understood: I know no honour but what is founded on reason, no dignity but in acting conformably with the sentiments of our Constituents. It is said Ministers must have the *previous* confidence of the House of Commons; what an opening for corruption! As to the East-India Bill, it might have useful purposes in its view, but it was accompanied with a wanton violation of Charters; it was accompanied with what would have totally destroyed the Liberties of this Country, the patronage of 100 millions! Was not this erecting the standard of bribery to the necessitous and unprincipled? No wonder that a Ministry that brought in such a Bill should be dismissed. His Majesty having chosen a new Ministry, the
House

House of Commons called for their dismissal; but not a word was said against them, and the requisition was made two hours, two little hours, after the person at their head had nobly refused to take to himself a lucrative office which former Ministers, honestly enough I allow, used to take either to themselves, or give it to their relations; but he, with a virtue hereditary in his family, threw it into the public stock. I must support such a Minister if I ever hope for your confidence, my Constituents, whom I now see around me.

Mr. R. S. MILNES said, I rise to support the Address; but first I must answer the remark, that it is strange that the same Gentlemen who formerly opposed the influence of the Crown should now oppose the House of Commons. I will retort, I am surprised that Gentlemen who opposed the undue influence of the Crown should oppose its just Prerogative. I am very sorry to rise against many of those men, whose principles I have been accustomed to revere; but, Sir, we have, with regret, seen their pernicious tendency; the *Coalition*, the *Coalition* must not be forgotten, I hope it shall be remembered to immortality, and posterity have a lesson, that the most amiable men, in private life, could not resist temptation when public advantage was set in opposition to interest. The East-India Bill has been most justly reprobated, and I heartily join in the condemnation; and in this, Sir, I

have the satisfaction of being supported by great authority. I will read the concluding part of the protest against the East-India Bill in 1773, (here he read it with the names of Rockingham, Fitzwilliam, &c. subscribed to it). A great deal has been said of the good characters of the Commissioners named in this last obnoxious East-India Bill; but this is not the tenure on which an Englishman chuses to hold his liberties; not on the precarious characters of men, but on the permanent security of law. (*He then read part of an admirable speech at Chelmsford by Mr. Day, upon the danger of great patronage*). I am afraid some Gentlemen will not sign the Address this day from apprehension of supporting Prerogative too much. Sir, though I would guard against the *influence* of the Crown as dangerous, I am for maintaining its *just Prerogative*, which is constitutional and safe; and if any future King should make the present Addresses of the People against the House of Commons a pretext to stretch his Prerogative, on whose head would the guilt lie? not on theirs who have been compelled to withstand an unjust incroachment by the House of Commons.

Mr. SPENCER STANHOPE said, he did not mean to be here to-day, he thought they who had battled it in London should have remained in London, and let Gentlemen in the country determine, without influence, without solicitation, but as others, some of whom had generally a pretty

pretty large attendance, had come down, he had come down also, and he was glad he had come; they were right and he was wrong. He said it rejoiced his heart to see the Great Ones of the land present to hear their conduct animadverted upon. He should have occasion to speak freely of the public conduct of some men, for whom he had a great regard in private life. He said he should speak to many particulars as a witness. He then gave an account of what passed in Parliament at different times between Lord North and Mr. Fox, when against each other, as it is to be found in several publications, and confirmed it by saying, *This I depose, I heard*, and then gave the history of the Coalition, which he compared to a chimney-sweeper and a miller embracing each other, by which was formed a *black and white, a pye-balled Administration*. He said they were fond of stating *previous* circumstances as to other Ministers; it was fit to mention previous circumstances as to themselves.—Now, as to their conduct in office, the first act was the restoration of Powell and Bainbridge, two notorious peculators, one of whom cut his throat and the other was convicted. He, however, would not call that an act of their administration, it was an act of one of their friends, a very good man, who through violence of temper had done it; they knew not how to get rid of it, and were obliged to support it. Next they made great professions of oeconomy, but

gave the Prince of Wales 100,000l. a year, tho' the King very wisely thought 50,000l. a year enough while he should remain unmarried. He said he did not like to talk of fathers and sons, but when one thinks of 100,000l. a year, and subsequent conduct, it is enough to provoke one against them. Then came the East-India Bill: He gave his vote against it on the second reading, but did not see all the danger of it till he was informed by the speech of the Lord Chancellor, who observed, that by a late act Government Contractors cannot sit in Parliament, but their Contractors may. A fourth estate would have been created, and if the King had passed that bill he might have resigned his Crown. As to a *rumour* of interference by Earl Temple, there was no proof of it, and the charge was that the Minister said many Lords, who had voted against the Bill, promised to him to vote for it. Was not the Minister's interference as bad as Lord Temple's? Punish them both then. As to secret influence, no man could detest it more, or would more heartily scout it than himself. It was not more illegal and unconstitutional in this Country than in France or any other: It was a thing bad in itself, bad in every government, bad in a private family to listen to backbiters, and yet still employ the People so attacked; but Lord Temple acted openly; he was the last man in the world to be a secret wriggling back-stairs animal. *Secret influence* has

has been the cry since Lord Bute's time, yet (his Lordship has no vote himself, but) all his Sons vote with the Coalition. Lord North too was called the Creature of secret influence, yet he is a part of this Coalition; so all who oppose Mr. Fox are guilty of secret influence, but join him, and there is absolution at once. The privileges of the House of Commons I would support to the utmost, I would fight, I would die for them; but if they incroach on another branch, they are in the wrong. The Rights of the House of Commons, as of the King, depend upon the People; and I ask you, Gentlemen, if you are of opinion all over England, that the Privilege of the House of Commons has been rightly used: If it is to *command*, say so: I say it is only to *advise*, I, therefore, am for supporting the Right of the House of Commons. The Right of the House of Commons is to controul, to impeach bad Ministers; but if they name them, how will they impeach? We have had too much of the executive Power brought into the House of Commons. We have applied to Minister-making so much, we have forgot *punishing* Ministers. We have heard a Gentleman say he had an Impeachment of Lord North in his pocket, who now walks arm in arm with him.

As to Prerogative, the case is very different from what it was in the last century, when the King had an Army, a Star Chamber, and other Powers.

Powers. There is now no danger; there is not the immense patronage of America, nor of that ruinous war, Lord North's War. There is a diminution of the Civil List, and 100,000*l.* to the Prince of Wales not only taken from it, but, with astonishment and grief I say it, is against the Crown. I come here to-day to resist encroachment; as I would resist the tyranny of *one*, I would resist the tyranny of *many*, and, at present, I fear more the tyranny of Venice than that of France. I should resist Lord North with the full bribe. I will resist another Gentleman, who would trample on Charters, and destroy the Crown; therefore I am for the Address; I am for supporting the son of Lord Chatham. Before I consent to dismiss the son of Lord Chatham, the most popular man that has been in this country since his father, I desire an answer to this question, What evil hath he done?

General HALE said, I have the honour to wear a Cockade as well as that Gentleman who spoke last. I am a Soldier. I may say I have done the State some service. I have heard much invective, much party spirit. Sir, I am a Soldier, but I am also a Citizen. I am for union. I am for Peace. We have made peace with France, with Spain, with Holland, with our Brethren of America, and shall we not have Peace amongst ourselves? If there is no check upon the Prerogative of the Crown it would destroy the Constitution. The House of Lords are in general
for

for the Crown ; though we have some Lords here this day who are Friends of the People. It is the House of Commons, Sir, that must check the Prerogative ; but I admit there is a fourth Estate, the People, who can controut all the other three. The House of Commons is the political Wife of the People ; if my Wife behaves ill, I may correct her ; but shall I suffer another man to correct my Wife ? No, Sir, he will debauch her. Shall the Crown then correct the House of Commons ? Let us recollect the old Fable of the horse and the stag—the horse, in order to drive the stag out of his pasture, took man upon his back ; the stag to be sure was driven away, but the horse was the slave of man ever after. Such was the fate of Denmark ; such may be our fate. I will acknowledge, and it is a bold word in this Meeting, I am a Friend to the *Coalition*. There are in this Country two great Parties, distinguished by the odious epithets of *Whig* and *Tory*. I am for an union of both. Some People are for a proscription against all who supported the American War. I myself opposed it ; but I must say, was that Proscription to take place, it would involve the greatest part of this Country : The Crown, the Lords, the Majority of the Commons, the Army, and Navy. My Brethren of the Sword all supported that War, many of them perhaps against their will. As to the two principal Leaders of the Parties, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox ; should I speak
against

against Mr. Pitt, it would be treason to the memory of his Father, who was my Friend; yes, Sir, Lord Chatham was my Friend. I wish to see Mr. Pitt in the Administration of this Country; but I am for having him to be the Servant of the Public. I hope in God he shall never be the Master. The Minister must be fitted to the House of Commons, not the House of Commons to the Minister; when that is the case, it puts me in mind of the common sign of snuff shops, where the Highlander seems to turn the mill, but, in reality, the mill turns the Highlander. My Friend Lord Chatham said, Liberty had often been made a stalking horse to get into Power; what would he have said if he had seen his Son stalking into Power behind secret Influence, and Prerogative stalking behind the name of William Pitt into the House of Commons among the People at large.

Colonel THORNTON said he would address himself only to plain honest Yorkshire Farmers, and in general was against the Address.

Mr. BAINES was for the Address, because it was against the Coalition, which had given the most serious alarm to all Independent Men, that there was no longer Public Virtue. He said the East-India Bill had Reformation for its pretence, but how has it effected this, by appointing Commissioners as ignorant of India as he was: Sir G. Elliot, Colonel North, and Lord Fitzwilliam? And why Lord Fitzwilliam? Because he had
great

great influence in this County. He paid some very handsome compliments to Mr. Duncombe, and added, I say this, not from intimacy with him; I have but little the pleasure of his acquaintance; not for favours received from him, for I have received only one in common with his other Constituents, his upright and independent conduct in Parliament. He in pretty severe terms made a comparison between Sir G. Savile and a great Man, who was present, and said, We have for four years been diminishing the Power of the Crown, shall we submit to an insolent Aristocracy?—*Tarquinium Regem qui non ulcerim, Sicinium feram?*

Lord FITZWILLIAM did not intend to have spoken, but felt himself called upon in a very extraordinary manner, made a very conciliating defence of his conduct, and shewed the different view he had of the East-India Company's affairs in 1773 and 1783: That Government had lent them a very large sum of money, and was deeply interested in seeing the affairs of the Company better managed than they had been by Servants. His Lordship said, I speak to a commercial Country, and put the case, that one merchant had advanced a great sum to another, whose affairs were embarrassed: Would it be unreasonable that, for the advantage of his Friend and his own security, he should put a Clerk into the Warehouse to carry on the Business to advantage? He said, he never promised to promote a
Reform

Reform in Parliament, for though he thought it necessary, he had not yet seen a practicable Plan for it, and he would not amuse with a fallacious hope. He charged Mr. Pitt with not being in earnest in that matter. He particularly said, to the generous Frecholders of Yorkshire, "If you have suspicions of me as a Peer, this promise I do make, that should you drive me from you, I will still look towards you; we must stand or fall together." If your Liberties are destroyed, the Peerage must perish in the ruins; we should, as in all arbitrary Governments, have it in our power to oppress our inferiors, and be oppressed ourselves; but this I will say, that were the Friends of Liberty to be oppressed by the Court, I should have the darkest dungeon. That most respectable man, whom all revered, was my instructor, every principle in this breast came from him.

The Earl of CARLISLE said he now stood trial before a most respectable Tribunal, his Fellow-Citizens, the loss of whose good opinion he should for ever most anxiously deplore. His Lordship made an able apology for the Coalition, which had been the object of so much invective, because some of those of whom it was composed had differed concerning the American War. He asked by what Rule of Reason, or the Christian Religion, eternal hatred was to continue when the cause of quarrel was at an end. The Coalition, he said, had one fault, an unpardonable

one to its enemies, its efficiency, so that it had defiance to open attacks; it was a column whose foundations rested in public opinion; but it was not secure against secret influence, by the mines of which it had been blown up. Nothing but a strong Administration could have ventured so great a measure as the East-India Bill. They knew a storm would blow from all the winds of heaven; it would be charged with violation of Charters, with confiscation of Property; but the most violent charge was not giving that immense Patronage to the Crown; and not giving the Crown what it never had was called robbery. That to change a systematic disobedience to good Government required something more than a milk-and-water measure: That what the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stanhope) had said, was indeed very courtly, but was better suited to the neighbourhood of St. James's than the Castle-yard of York: He had endeavoured to inspire pity for the Crown, by mentioning how much power it had lost; but this, said his Lordship, cannot have countenance from those who hear me. Another doctrine sounds better; Do not give this patronage to the Crown till you know what is its magnitude. It must be taken from the Company. What then shall be done? Is there no Middle-Haven in which it may be placed with safety? Yes; in Men of character, of family, of fortunes above temptation.

tion. It passed by a great majority in the House of Commons; but when it got into another place, a rumour spread of what struck at the very vitals of the Constitution. I will name Earl Temple.—There was rumour that that noble Lord intimated to other Peers, that his Majesty would consider those who voted for that Bill to be not only not his Friends but his Enemies. This, he said, was to traduce the Sovereign, that he should act so unconstitutionally as to appear, not where he ought to be seen, on the Throne of England, but should descend to go among the Benches of the House of Lords. Should not the House of Commons doubt a Ministry that came in by such influence? I am therefore against an Address which carries incense to those who do not deserve it.

Earl FAUCONBERG spoke with great warmth in favour of the Address; arraigned Aristocracy in Opposition. Who, said his Lordship, is the Original, the Head of it? CHARLES FOX. Did I think to see an Oriental Aristocracy removed from Brooks's to the Castle-yard of YORK!—Whether is George the Third or Charles Fox to reign? We have here the Courtiers, the Ministers of the new, and I trust never to-be-created Power. God forbid the Patronage of India should go to the Crown; but shall it go to Charles Fox? Is he a Man of such Virtue? A Majority of the House of Commons has been led captive by the artful arguments
of

of an individual of great abilities. Let then the People interfere. How long this Constitution shall last, People, depends on you; it is you must preserve it.

The Earl of SURREY said that Mr. Fox wished to bring Lord North's Administration to trial before Parliament; but Mr. Dundas, late Lord Advocate of Scotland, and Mr. Pitt, now Minister of this Country, had deprecated the inquiry, wishing that all parties should unite.

Mr. WILBERFORCE made a most argumentative and eloquent speech, which was listened to with the most eager attention, and received with the loudest acclamations of applause. It was indeed a reply to every thing that had been said against the Address; but there was such an exquisite choice of expression, and pronounced with such rapidity, that we are unable to do it justice in any account we can give of it; we shall however give a few particulars: He said those persons, of whom he was one that opposed the undue influence of the Crown, should be the foremost in support of its Prerogative, to shew they acted from principle not from party spirit, or personal antipathy to any Minister. He dwelt long on the odious East-India Bill; read several clauses of it; expatiated on its violation of chartered Property; on its similarity to an arbitrary and severe Roman Proscription, and not to an English Act of Parliament. He alarmed the Freeholders, by shewing
that

that it might have been a Precedent for exercising the same tyranny over the property of every Man in the Kingdom; took notice that Lord Fitzwilliam had put the case of a private merchant: I did apprehend, said he, that such a consequence might follow from this Bill; but I did not know it had been in the contemplation of its Supporters. As to the effect of the Bill upon the Constitution, he said, whatever of wealth we have seen flowing into the Country from India; whatever of Power, which is now divided, part in the Minister of the day, part in the Directors, part in the Proprietors, all, all was to have centered in this Commission. As to degrading the House of Commons, he said, they degrade themselves when they make unjust claims, and put themselves against the Crown in a way they must be defeated. Let them keep to their own Rights, their true constitutional simplicity, and they will be respected. He arraigned the Coalition with keen severity, as an union of Men who disagreed, not only as to the American War, but had never agreed in any one principle; who mutually imputed to each other the loss of America, and one of whom had been branded by the other with the most ignominious epithets; while he declared he never could trust him. He said the strength of that Ministry, which had been insisted on, was a dangerous circumstance, for in the over-weening confidence in their strength they had dared to bring in the
East-

East-India Bill, thinking the People wanted to be deceived. He desired the Coalition might be judged by its conduct : It had brought forth that East-India Bill, which carried the lineaments of both its parents, Corruption and Violence.— He concluded with an earnest Address : We are now, said he, to decide upon a solemn crisis ; you are now upon your trial ; we have heard much of an Aristocracy ; if there is any such bias on your minds, let no little consideration weigh against the public interest. If you approve of those Ministers who have fought, and I hope I shall say have conquered, in support of the Constitution, come forth and honestly say so.— That distinguished person who has done so much in your cause will esteem your approbation his best reward.

LORD JOHN CAVENDISH said, That being one of those whose conduct had been particularly arraigned, he had a claim to be heard to justify himself. That the East-India Bill was the measure which was particularly objected to ; that as it took its rise from a very long inquiry, and an examination of many papers and much evidence, it was natural the Public should be misled ; for being in general unacquainted with the greatness of the evil, they did not see the necessity of so strong a remedy : That a handle had been taken from this grossly to misrepresent it. That in the first place Mr. Wilberforce was mistaken in

in stating that their present Charter was purchased with money; it was not: And next, that their Property was taken from them; of which they were not deprived of one farthing. The case was simply this, that in the present situation they were totally unequal to the management of their affairs; that from weakness, misconduct, and the form of their Court of Directors being ill suited to their present circumstances, they were in the greatest distress; they owed more than a million to the Public for duties; they could not legally make any dividend to the Proprietors for want of money, and were enabled to do so, for the last two years, by special Acts of Parliament; that the friends and relations of their servants abroad were so powerful in the Court of Proprietors, as to screen their conduct from enquiry, and to thwart every regulation proposed to correct abuses, which had risen to such a height as to disgrace the name of an Englishman. In this case it was proposed to invest the management of their affairs, for the term of four years, in the hands of special Commissioners, whose powers and duties were prescribed in the Act; that they were selected as men whose characters and circumstances were such already, as nothing could be an inducement to them to be guilty of any abuses; but if there was any suspicion of it, or even of inefficiency, an Address from either House can remove them. That as to the patronage

patronage so much talk'd of, it was impossible to separate the power of promotion and removal from those who were to direct and controul persons intrusted with such vast interests; but a Bill accompanied the other for the purpose of tying them down to precise rules in their manner of proceeding, and every body was invited to suggest any fresh restraints, which might leave them as little power to abuse as possible, as consistent with the object of the Bill. This was nearly the whole of this famous Bill. As to what was said of Charters; they had often before been equally infringed upon much slihter reasons, when Lord Chatham was Minister and Lord Camden Lord Chancellor: They voted a dividend for themselves, which was rescinded by Act of Parliament, and were hindered from making it till such time as they gave the Government such a share in their supposed profits as they thought fit. Since that time the Supervisors they were sending out were stopped, a Governor and Council of Bengal appointed: The qualification of Voters for the choice of Directors altered, by several Acts of Parliament; yet this intermeddling in their business was not called for by such necessity as the present, when it is known that a Country, containing three or four times as many People as Great-Britain, is impoverished and laid waste, by the misconduct of their servants abroad, who grow immensely rich themselves, whilst the Company is in the

greatest distress; and no sufficient means have yet been found to restrain them.

The next objection is what is called the Coalition. Immediately after Lord North's removal from power, an enquiry into his conduct was proposed, which was resisted by persons of various descriptions, as tending to much mischief, and hardly possible to be carried on. When he had been long out of office, and it appeared how large a number of those, who had agreed in opinion with him, still continued attached to him, it was evident no stable Government could be formed without his concurrence; the measures on which men had differed being at an end, it was best for the country to prevail on persons so circumstanced, to forget their differences, and unite towards forming a steady Government, the Thing this Country really wants. Could it have been carried a little farther, this Country had not now been in its present situation. Sir G. Savile's name having been mentioned as disapproving it, I can only say, that he frequently visited them, assisted them with his advice, and applied to them for trifling favours, which I believe he would not have done to persons he disapproved. As to the East-India Bill he was more certain, hearing the breach of Charters objected, he answered, What human Power can grant a Charter to rob and lay waste a whole Nation.

As to the present matters in dispute, which
have

have given occasion to this meeting, they were not about the Rights of the Crown or House of Commons, but about the prudent exercise of them ; and clashing between them was dangerous indeed, and ever since the occasion had been avoided, and some kind of temper, or mutual concession, had been found to avoid it, less dissention had lately been used than in all former times ; but that the present Address, not quite exact in some of its facts, only tended to make matters worse. That if Parliament was dissolved, as was reported, it suspended the present ill situation ; but at the same time was productive of so many evils, that the advisers of it wanted very strong reasons to justify such a measure.

His Lordship made several other remarks, but the repeated call for the question, and noise made, prevented his Lordship from being heard.

In the course of his speech Gen. Hale had said that Sir George Savile had been a friend to the Coalition ; to which Mr. Duncombe rose and replied, that being himself greatly irritated at the Coalition he waited on Sir George Savile at the time of its being formed, and expressed his disgust with much warmth, in consequence of which he received for answer from Sir George, "I do not approve of the Coalition myself, but I am not quite so angry as you."

Paper III.

*Proceedings at a Meeting of the County of York,
on the 10th day of February, 1785.*

AT a General Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held at the Castle of York, on Thursday the 10th day of February, 1785, in pursuance of notice given by the Sheriff of the said County, agreeable to the requisition of a very respectable body of Freeholders, the following Petition was unanimously agreed to:—

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain,
in Parliament assembled.*

The Humble Petition of the Freeholders of the County of York,

Sheweth,
THAT your Petitioners, sensible of the original excellence of the Constitution of this Country, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the genuine principles on which it was founded.

Your

Your Petitioners further shew that it is necessary to the welfare of the People, that the Commons' House of Parliament should have a common interest with the Nation, and that in the present state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, the Commons of this realm are partially and inadequately represented, and consequently cannot have that security for their liberties which it is the aim of the Constitution to give them.

Your Petitioners, therefore, most humbly supplicate this Honourable House to take into their most serious consideration the present inadequate state of the Representation of the People in Parliament, and to apply such remedy to this great Constitutional evil as to this Honourable House may seem meet.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Resolved unanimously, That the Petition now read shall be signed by the Sheriff and any of the Freeholders present, who approve thereof, on behalf of themselves and the other Freeholders of this County.

Resolved, That the Members for this County be desired to present to Parliament the Petition now adopted.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Assembly be given to the High-Sheriff, for

his ready compliance with the wishes of the County in calling this Meeting, and for his impartial conduct on this day.

WILLIAM DANBY, Sheriff.

Paper IV.

*Debate at a Meeting of the County of York, on
the 10th of February, 1785.*

THE Petition was moved by Gen. St. LEGER, who expressed his great pleasure in the zeal which actuated the County to persevere in pursuing the great object of a Parliamentary Reformation; he congratulated himself on having an opportunity, in so full and respectable a Meeting of the Freeholders of Yorkshire, of joining his voice to theirs to promote a measure so necessary to the recovery of the British Constitution.

Mr. CHALONER seconded the motion.

Mr. H. DUNCOMBE then rose. He congratulated his Constituents on the probable success of a measure which originated in this County, and
which

which promises to prove so contributory to the public welfare. He reflected on the misconduct of former Ministers, and thence inferred that their resistance to the means of removing corruption, by which alone they had governed, though a subject of regret, could by no means excite our wonder. He observed, that as measures were the only just criterion of Ministers, so it was no bad earnest of a Minister when he called for a canvas of his conduct, and referred himself to the People, whose part it is to controul and punish Ministers. The distress of this Country he considered as a sufficient proof of the necessity of a Parliamentary Reformation; and calling to recollection the impolicy of those measures which had been pursued during the last twelve unhappy years, declared, that though their effects had been predicted, yet they were obstinately pursued by an Administration which was weakly, implicitly, and servilely supported by Parliament; a Parliament which, unfaithful to its trust, had either slept on duty, or treacherously betrayed it to the enemy. He remarked the serious and steady temper which the People had at length been roused to assume, and was pleased to find the Country in a disposition to be no farther trifled with; the caprices of a Minister were no longer to be acquiesced in; no farther compliance with his ruinous projects could be submitted to:—Had an equal spirit actuated the Public some years ago, and had they

they been able to impress their sense upon Parliament then, a war, unjust in its principles and ruinous in its consequences, would have either been entirely prevented or brought to an earlier period. He rejoiced, however, in the prospects that now open. He saw better principles revive, and hoped for better consequences from them. He considered all other means of retrieving the Public and preserving its Constitution as futile and nugatory, and relied on an amended Representation of the People in Parliament; this alone he looked on as effectual, permanent, and exempt from vicissitude and change.

He then turned to the resources of this Country, and affirmed that the experience of the last year has proved that they are not exhausted quite. The suppression of that illicit trade, which grew out of our late system of finance, opens a fairer prospect. The taxes which have been lately imposed; he acknowledged were heavy, but they were necessary too; they were not imposed for new destructive projects; their purpose was to liquidate a debt of thirty millions of money, the last sad legacy of calamity bequeathed by a wretched Ministry to this unhappy Country. The measures that are now pursued, originate in consummate acknowledged abilities and integrity. The amendment of our Representation is now the measure of a Government which does not require corruption to justify its conduct; and
an

an amended Representation augurs prosperity to the Country.

Mr. JOHN MILNES. As I was ever an advocate for the business of this day, I heartily congratulate you upon a greater prospect of success; and I am happy to think that the conduct of many of us, at the late County Address Meeting, has greatly gained us the confidence of those who were before fearful of our proceedings; we then convinced them we were equally friends to the just Prerogatives of the Crown and the Liberties of the People; indeed the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform seems to be more generally allowed of than ever. No where, in my opinion, is there a more glaring instance of the defective state of our Representation than in the manufacturing part of the West-Riding of this County: A manufactory (*the cloathing manufactory*) which employs some hundred thousands of people, and brings in to the Country upwards of three millions sterling annually, yet sends not one single Member to Parliament, nor has any Representative there, unless you will except those who are sent by the County at large. How disproportionate this, when many small towns and villages, and those also under influence, send each two Members to Parliament.

Mr. Chairman, I now beg leave to intreat Gentlemen's indulgence to a circumstance which passed at the late County Address Meeting, for it

it seems that part of Colonel Thornton's speech relating to me was so much misunderstood, that an idea has gone forth that I had the title of a Baronet offered me to support the Address: As I was conscious of having had no such offer made me, or of ever having told Colonel Thornton so, I immediately after the Meeting waited upon Colonel Thornton for an explanation, who declared, that what he had alluded to was a conversation which had passed three years before, and which I can assure you was intended as no other than a joke. Colonel Thornton moreover declared, that he was extremely sorry for having made mention of it, and that he meant no kind of offence to me whatsoever. I again had a conversation with Colonel Thornton, and his apology was very full and satisfactory. My having left the wall of the Castle-yard along with Sir W. Foulis, Mr. Banks, and others, to get some refreshment, before Colonel Thornton made that part of his speech relating to me, will, I hope, apologize for this intrusion.

Earl FAUCONBERG declared himself ambitious of the attention of so respectable and numerous a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County.— Though a Peer of the Realm, he considered himself at liberty to express his wishes to see the Representation of the People put upon a better footing, and also his confidence in those who have now the honour to be called to his Majesty's Councils, and whom he is happy to see

see enjoy the concurrent approbation of both the Crown and People. He congratulated the County upon a Representative (Mr. Duncombe) whose integrity, solidity, attention, and judgment did honour to their choice, and whom he considered as a kind of balance to the defects of our Representation. He abjured all Republican ideas; the example of 1658 however he thought deserved attention; for at that time Representatives were added to the Counties, and also to the Commercial Towns. His Lordship then adverted to the improvement of our revenues, in consequence of the new laws and regulations to restrain the illicit practice of Smuggling; and affirmed that in the year 1784 the Customs had increased 400,000*l.* and the Excise no less than a million. He also declared that instead of being against us, Exchange was now 9 and 9*½* per cent. in our favour. Tea, which had been formerly smuggled into Britain by our enemies, with a view to distress us, and which had actually effected a loss to the revenue of 2,000,000*l.* per annum, was now imported by our own Commercial Companies; by which means that sum of 2,000,000*l.* which would otherwise have gone to France, now flows into our own coffers under the conduct and auspices of better Ministers, whose views, extending beyond the little considerations of places and emoluments, comprehend both our Constitutional and Commercial Interests; under the direction of that virtuous and
able

able Young Man, who not only is, but has the prospect of long continuing, the Minister of this Country. With so much good in view, therefore, and with persons placed in responsible situations by the act of the Sovereign and applause of the People, we should bear as men, for a while, those burdens which are unfortunately, but necessarily, laid upon us. Our resources thus increase, and our manufactures, particularly in the West-Riding, will improve; the restraints on smuggling will save to this Country that great quantity of wool that has been carried out to our enemies the French, and which they have occasion for to work up that of their own nation, and consequently prevent their being our rivals in that branch of trade; our shipping will increase, and with it our Naval strength.—Let us then with a sober patience for a little while expect the benefits of these measures, and our confidence will be necessarily confirmed.

Mr. R. S. MILNES could not suppress his entire satisfaction in seeing the present Meeting. The conduct of the Freeholders, he observed, had realized the public esteem in which they were universally held. He expressed his high opinion of the present Minister; but still recommended to them not to rely on any Minister, however well disposed, but to place their confidence only in that which could not deceive them, and must be lasting—a Reformation of Parliament. What the consequence of their application

application to the House of Commons would be he could not tell; he therefore urged them, at all events, to persevere in this pursuit; and declared, that if they should even be foiled now, when the prospect is so fair, it was his determined resolution never to abandon the measure.

Mr. WYVILL: I will address myself to you in a few words only.—As the County of York has taken so decided a part in favour of Parliamentary Reformation, against every effort of a corrupt Government to suppress their feelings, it would be truly surprising if the Freeholders had remained inactive on this occasion, when Government takes so decided a part in its favour. I think, therefore, the County is much obliged to those Gentlemen who signed the Requisition, and still more so to the worthy High-Sheriff, who, by complying with their request, has once more given us an opportunity to declare our sentiments upon the question.

The Petition before you has my hearty approbation; it had also the approbation of the County in two successive Meetings; but unexceptionable as it appears to me, there may be Gentlemen who are not yet fully convinced of its propriety, though they have not risen to express their dissent. The question has been so ably discussed on former occasions, and so much has been said in favour of Reformation on the true grounds of Government, and the Principles of our Constitution, that I despair of being

ing able to throw any new light on the subject in that general view: I therefore wish to confine my observations to some recent facts that have happened since the last Petition was presented to Parliament, which seem to afford new arguments for the measure, or to confirm the old.

The late heavy burdens which have been unavoidably imposed on the public, present one strong argument for Parliamentary Reformation. Five years ago this country, and the kingdom at large, groaning under the pressure of calamity, stood forward to petition Parliament for an Economical Reform, and very intelligibly implied its earnest wish for the discontinuance of the American War. The sense of the Country was then very well understood to be against that War: It was impossible Parliament could mistake it; yet, from an improper leaning towards the Minister, Parliament refused to comply. The war was therefore protracted for two years more, at an expence exceeding *Fifty Millions*; and by this treachery to the Public a necessity was incurred for those heavy burthens, which have been imposed by two successive Administrations for the last two years. Parliament therefore requires Reformation; for if Parliament could support a Minister in the prosecution of a war against the manifest sense of the People, what reason have we to trust that future Parliaments may not support a Minister
in

in commencing a war against the sense of the People. If the spirit of liberty, therefore, were extinct in this Country; if the People were dead to every sense of their Constitutional Rights;—yet, in an economical view only, it would be their interest to support a Parliamentary Reformation.

A still stronger argument arises out of the late East-India Bill, and the disputes consequent upon it. By touching on this delicate subject, it is far from my intention to provoke a debate foreign to the question before the Meeting; still less do I mean to give the smallest offence to those Gentlemen who hold sentiments on the subject different from my own. I have experienced their candour on many occasions; I respect their general principles, and I hope I shall not give any personal offence, as it is my purpose studiously to avoid it. On the one hand Gentlemen complain, that the privileges of the House of Commons have been violated by the Minister's staying in office after that House had declared its want of confidence in him; they lament the fallen dignity of that House; they lament that it has lost the ancient confidence of the Public. How is this fact to be accounted for, but by admitting that the suspicion of Parliamentary Corruption has become general? The nation knew, that in numerous instances a few great Lords appointed their Deputies to sit in that House, and that many more were returned to Parliament by the

VOL. II. A a little

little venal Boroughs. They felt themselves only the nominal Constituent of Parliament, and thence inferred, that no common interest subsisting between Parliament and the body of the Nation, Parliament might act a part directly opposite to the sense and interest of the Nation. And hence again the facility with which the Opposers of the India Bill impressed the Public with the almost universal sense of its dangerous consequence, and the necessity of supporting the Minister of the Crown against an unfaithful Parliament. The confidence of the Nation, therefore, can only be restored to Parliament by the success of the measure which has been now proposed to you. On the other hand, many think the India Bill a measure big with the most dangerous consequences: By vesting the influence of that great Commercial Company in a few Aristocratical Persons, a new Power would have been created unknown to the Constitution, and utterly subversive of it; an Aristocracy would have been formed, which, aided by the Treasury of Bengal, would have been able, and perhaps willing, to degrade the Crown to the ground, and trample also the rights and privileges of the People under their feet. This danger is, for the present, escaped; but if the abuses of Representation remain uncorrected, it may soon return again. Factious and corrupt majorities may be formed once more; against these therefore, we must guard: For if these should at any time succeed,

succeed, the due balance of the Constitution must be for ever overturned. There was a time when the danger of innovation was much insisted on by cool and cautious men; and it is not surprising, while measures of such magnitude are agitated by private individuals only, or assemblies of the People, that fears of this nature should have their weight with men of moderate or timid tempers. I have the pleasure, however, to observe, that innovation is no longer considered but as a visionary fear: For when the measure is taken up by Government itself; when a plan of Reformation is proposed by a Minister who has proved himself a Friend to the Constitution in all its branches, it is impossible to suppose that any change can be intended, by which the lawful Power of the Crown would be impaired, or the just and antient Rights of the People be invaded. The improved prospect of success is another argument which strongly persuades the adoption of this measure; for when can a Petition be more seasonable than at a time when there is every reason to believe it will receive the support even of Government itself?—The Public is well apprized that I have had the honour of having some communication with Mr. Pitt; but what I say on this topic, I do not bring forward on any authority, but merely collect from what is equally notorious to the Public as to myself. From the last clause in the King's Speech, explained as it was by Mr. Pitt's com-

ment upon it in the House of Commons, it is manifest that the Cabinet does not disapprove of Mr. Pitt's intention *honestly and boldly, as a Man and as a Minister*, to support a Parliamentary Reform, otherwise we should have heard of dissensions in the Cabinet ; but this not having been the case, it is just to infer the probability of their support. Thus future factions and corrupt combinations of Men will be cut off, the Crown will be safe, and the People gratified in their dearest wish. Many other parts of the kingdom, I have no doubt, will concur in the Measures of this County ; but if the People of England should be so lost to every sense of just policy, as to disregard the fate of a question, in which all their most valuable interests are involved, the honour of having supported that question to the last will belong exclusively to Yorkshire, and the spirit of the English People at large must be acknowledged to be lost. But I augur no such ill—you will be well followed by the nation—Parliament will take the measure from you—the Minister will press it upon Parliament—Representation will be reformed—and the Constitution will be saved.

ON Saturday the 12th instant, at a general and very numerous Meeting of the Freemen and Inhabitants of the City of York, convened, in compliance with a Requisition, by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall, a similar Petition was agreed to, and addressed "to the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament assembled, and praying them to take into their most serious consideration, the present inadequate Representation of the People in Parliament, and to apply such remedy to that alarming evil as to them may seem meet."—Both in the County and City there prevailed the most perfect unanimity in the pursuit of this vast Constitutional object.

Paper V.

Debate in the House of Commons, on Monday the 18th of April, 1785, on a Motion by the Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT, to amend the Representation of the People in Parliament.

MR. Chancellor PITT rose to call the attention of the House to the important subject of a Reform in the Representation of the People. It was unnecessary for him to say how much this subject ought to engage the attention of Gentlemen, and how nearly it was connected with every other interest which could be important to Englishmen.

In entering upon this subject, he said, he was aware of the division of sentiment, and of the pertinacity with which some men adhered to opinions inimical to every species of Reform. But he rose with hopes infinitely more sanguine than he ever felt before, and with hopes which he conceived to be rationally and solidly founded. There never was a moment when the minds of Men were more enlightened on this interesting topic than now; there never was a moment when they were more prepared for its discussion. A great many objections which from time to time

time had been adduced against Reform, would not lie against the Propositions which he intended to submit to the House; and the question was in truth new in all its shapes to the present Parliament.

He was sensible of the difficulty which there was now, and ever must be in proposing a Plan of Reform. The number of Gentlemen who were hostile to Reform, were a phalanx which ought to give alarm to any individual upon rising to suggest such a measure. Those who, with a sort of superstitious awe, reverence the Constitution so much as to be fearful of touching even its defects, had always reprobated every attempt to purify the Representation. They acknowledged its inequality and corruption, but in their enthusiasm for the grand fabric, they would not suffer a reformer with unhallowed hands to repair the injuries which it suffered from time. Others, who perceiving the deficiencies that had arisen from circumstances, were solicitous of their amendment, yet resisted the attempt, under the argument, that when once we had presumed to touch the Constitution in one point, the awe which had heretofore kept us back from the daring enterprize of innovation, might abate, and there was no foreseeing to what alarming lengths we might progressively go under the mask of Reformation. Others there were, but for these he confessed he had not the same respect, who considered the present

state of Representation as pure and adequate to all its purposes, and perfectly consistent with the first principles of Representation. The fabric of the House of Commons was an ancient pile, on which they had been all taught to look with reverence and awe: from their cradles they had been accustomed to view it as a pattern of perfection; their ancestors had enjoyed freedom and prosperity under it; and therefore an attempt to make any alterations in it, would be deemed by some enthusiastic admirers of antiquity, as impious and sacrilegious. No one revered the venerable fabric more than he did; but all mankind knew, that the best institutions, like human bodies, carried in themselves the seeds of decay and corruption; and therefore he thought himself justifiable in proposing remedies against this corruption, which the frame of the Constitution must necessarily experience in the lapse of years, if not prevented by wise and judicious regulations.

To men who argued in this manner, he did not presume to address his Propositions, for such men he despaired of convincing; but he had well-grounded hopes, that in what he should offer to the House, he should be able to convince Gentlemen of the former descriptions, that tho' they had argued so strongly against general and unexplained notions of Reform, their arguments would not weigh against the precise and explicit Proposition which it was his purpose to submit to

to them. The objection to Reform, under the idea of innovation, would not hold good against his suggestion, for it was not an innovation on any known and clear principle of the Constitution. Their objection to Reform, because it might introduce habits of change and alteration, of which no man might foresee the extent or termination, would be equally inapplicable to his Plan, for in his mind it would be complete and final. In his mind it would comprehend all that a rational reformer would think it necessary now or at any time to do, and would therefore give no license to future or more extensive schemes. The argument, that no alteration of the number of Members composing the House ought at any time to be suffered—and that no Reform of the Representation in what was emphatically called the corrupt parts ought to be accomplished by an act of Power, would be equally inapplicable—for, by his Proposition, he meant to lay it down as a first principle, that the number of the House ought to remain the same, and that the Reform of decayed Boroughs ought not to proceed on disfranchisement.—This, he said, was the third effort made by him, since he had the honour of a seat in Parliament, to prevail upon the Legislature to adopt a Reform in the Representation of the People. He had twice failed in his endeavours to effect this salutary purpose, and yet he was not discouraged from renewing them this day: he was encouraged

raged by two circumstances which he had not in his favour on the former occasions. The Reform which he now meant to propose, was more consistent with the views of the best and most moderate men; and this was a new House of Commons, that had never been consulted on the subject of Reform, and consequently had not, like the two last, negatived a Proposition made for introducing it. Therefore, though the subject might be thought stale by the Public, as it had been so frequently debated, it was perfectly new to the House of Commons which he had then the honour to address, in which it had never yet been debated.

That gentlemen should have set themselves against general and unqualified notions of Reform he did not much wonder; and that they should be still more inimical to the vague, impracticable, and inconclusive chimeras, which had been thrown out at different times by different reformers, he was not astonished. Reverencing the Constitution, and feeling all the pride of an Englishman on the experience of its beauty, even with all its blemishes, it was no wonder that Gentlemen should be alarmed at suggestions which were founded on no principle, and which admitted of no limit. But there were certain Propositions, in which he had reason to think that all men must coincide.

If there were any specific means of purifying the state of Representation on its first principle,
without

without danger of altering the fabric, and without leaving it either in uncertainty or disorder, such means ought, with becoming caution, to be used.

On this clear and indisputable Proposition it was that he wished to go. It was because he imagined that a Plan might be formed, congenial with the first principles of Representation, which would reform the present inadequate state, and provide in all future times for as adequate and perfect a state of Representation as they could expect to arrive at in the present circumstances of the country. He was aware, when he spoke in this manner, that the idea of general and complete Representation, so as to comprehend every individual, and give him his personal share in the Legislature of the country, was a thing incompatible with the population and state of the kingdom. The practicable definition of what the popular branch of our Legislature was at this day, he took to be precisely this:—"An Assembly freely elected, between whom and the mass of the People there was the closest union and most perfect sympathy." Such an House of Commons it was the purpose of the Constitution originally to erect, and such an House of Commons it was the wish of every reformer now to establish. Those who went farther—those who went to ideas of individual Representation, deluded themselves with impossibilities;

possibilities; and took the attention of the Public from that sober and practicable path in which they might travel safely and with ease, to launch them into an unbounded sea, where they had no pilot to direct, and no star to guide them.

Solicitous as he was of Reform, he never could countenance vague and unlimited notions. It was his wish to see the House adopt a sober and practicable scheme, which should have for its basis the original principle of Representation, and should produce the object which every lover of our Constitution must have in view, a House of Commons between whom and the People there should exist the same interest and the most perfect sympathy and union. It was his purpose to see an arrangement made, which, while it corrected the present inadequate state of Representation, should keep it adequate when made so, and should give to the Constitution purity, consistency, and, if possible, immortality. Such was the sanguine idea which he entertained from his project, and such he trusted would be the sentiment of the House upon its exposition. Whatever argument might be adduced against its practicability, and what against its expediency, he trusted that the old argument of innovation would not be alledged. As he had said it was not an innovation, and he was sure that Gentlemen would agree with him in this sentiment, when they turned their eyes with him back to the earliest periods of our history,
and

and traced the practice of our ancestors in the purest days.

He considered it on such a review, as one of the most indisputable doctrines of antiquity, that the state of Representation was to be changed with the change of circumstances. As far back as the period of the reign of Edward I. which was the first time when they could trace distinct descriptions of men in the Representation, the doctrine of change was clearly understood. The Counties were not uniform; the number of Members was frequently varied; and from that period to the reign of Charles II. there were few reigns in which Representation was not varied, and in which it did not undergo diminutions or fluctuations of some kind or other. Those changes were owing to the discretion which was left in the Executive Branches of the Legislature, to summon or not to summon whom they pleased to Parliament. The Executive Branch of the Legislature was vested with this discretion on no other principle, than that the places which might for the time being, have such a share in the general scale of the People, as should entitle them, or rather subject them to the duty of sending Members to the Representative Body, might be appointed to do so. In this very discretionary Power the principle of alteration was visible, and it manifested the original notion which our forefathers had of Representation to be this: That whereas
it

it was impossible that every individual of a populous country could make choice of a Representative, the task should be committed to such Bodies of Men as might be collected together in communities in the several districts of the kingdom:—and as such communities must from their nature be fluctuating and moveable, that the Crown should have the discretion of pointing out which of them were proper from their size and scale to execute this duty for the rest. Every man must acknowledge that to have exercised this discretion otherwise than soundly, must have been a high grievance; and he needed not to say that if it were now vested in the Crown, and that Ministers might fix on such places as they pleased for the choice of Members, there was not a man in England who would not consider the Liberties of his Country as extinguished. Such discretion, however, did exist, and he mentioned it to shew, that Principles in Representation had been departed from, and had their existence no longer. The argument against change was an argument against the experience of every period of our history. There had not been of late any addition to the County share in the Representation, except indeed of the Palatines, of the Principality of Wales, and of another addition which had been made since the period at which it was common to say that our Constitution was fixed, the Revolution,

volution, namely, the addition of all that part of the united kingdom called Scotland.

But in the Borough Representation the changes had been infinitely more common. Gentlemen had undoubtedly read, that of the Boroughs which used formerly to send Members to Parliament, seventy-two had been disfranchised, that was to say, that the Crown had ceased to summon them at General Elections to return Burgesses to the House of Commons. After the Restoration, thirty-six of these Boroughs petitioned Parliament to be restored to the exercise of their ancient franchise; their prayer was granted; and to this day they continued to enjoy it. But the other thirty-six not having presented any Petition on the subject, had not recovered their lost franchise. Upon this he would be bold to say, that considering the restoration of the former, and the continued deprivation of the latter, the spirit of the Constitution had been grossly violated, if it was true, (but which he denied) that the extension to one set of Boroughs of the franchise of returning Members to Parliament, and the resumption of it from others, was a violation of the Constitution: for if the numbers could not originally have been constitutionally increased, so they could not constitutionally have been diminished: but having been once diminished, to restore them might by some be said to make an innovation: and if the Parliament had any authority

thority to restore the franchise, the Principle of Restoration ought to have been extended to the seventy-two Boroughs, and not confined to one half of them. Here then it appeared manifest, that the whole was governed by a principle, which militated directly against the modern doctrine, that to do what had been constantly done for ages, by the wisest of our ancestors, was to innovate upon the Constitution. The seventy-two Boroughs in question had discontinued to return Members, because they had fallen into decay. Thirty-six of them afterwards recovered their franchise, when they recovered their former wealth and population; but the other thirty-six not having renovated their former vigour and consequence in the State, remained to this day deprived of the franchise which had been taken from them, when they lost the wealth and population, on account of which they had originally obtained it.

Why then was there a greater objection to any change in the Representation of certain Boroughs now than there had been in former periods? Why were they more sacred now than the thirty-six Boroughs which had been disfranchised, and which now had no share in the Representation of the Country? The arguments that influenced Gentlemen against any change now, would have equally operated against the thirty-six Boroughs which had from time to time been extinguished, as well as against the
same

same number, which having been abolished, were, from a change of their circumstances, re-instituted in their privilege. In those earlier periods, such was the notion of Representation, that as one Borough decayed, and another arose, the one was abolished, and the other invested with the right; and alterations took place from accident or caprice, which, however, so far as they went, stood good and valid. The alterations were not made by Principle; they did not arise from any fixed rule laid down and invariably pursued, but they were founded in that notion which gave the discretionary Power to the Crown, viz. that the principal places, and not the decayed Boroughs, should be called upon to exercise the Right of Election.

He contended, therefore, that the same notion should now prevail, but that it should be rescued from that accident and caprice in which it had before been involved—that the alteration should be made on principle—and that they should establish this as a clear and eternal axiom in Representation—that it should always be the same—that it should not depend upon locality or name, but upon number and condition, and that a standard should be fixed for its size. He would submit to the world which of the two were most anxious for the preservation of the original Principle of the Constitution, he who was for maintaining the exterior and name of Representation, when the substance was gone, or he who, preferring the substance and reality

of Representation to the name and exterior, was solicitous of changing its seat from one part of the Country to another, as one place might flourish and another decay. It was his idea, that if they could deduce any good Principles from theory, and apply them to practice, it was their duty to do so. It was then the theory, and it had been the practice in all times to adapt the Representation to the state of the Country; and this was exactly what it was his intention to recommend to the House. Now and in all future time to adapt the Representation to the state of the Country, was the idea of Reform which he entertained.

Perhaps Gentlemen would be apt to exclaim that this contradicted the declaration with which he set out, viz. that the plan which he meant to propose would be final and complete. When they came, however, to hear the whole of his idea, he trusted they would find that his Proposition had in view not only an immediate Reform, but that it comprehended an arrangement which must operate in all future time, and provide for the changes which in the nature of things must incessantly arise in a country like Britain. He wished to establish a permanent rule to operate like the discretion out of which our present Constitution had sprung. That discretion would be very improper to exist now, though in ruder times it was not so dangerous when Representation was rather a burden than a privilege, rather a duty than an object of ambition.

ambition. For that discretion he was no advocate; but he wished to remind Gentlemen, that that discretionary power had never been wrested from the hands of the Executive Branch of the Legislature, and that to this day there existed but the act of Union to prevent the Crown from adding to or diminishing the number of that House. By the act of Union the proportionate numbers for the two parts of the kingdom were fixed, and from the date of that act, but not till that act, the discretion of the Crown was at an end.

The argument of withstanding all Reformation, from the fear of the ill consequences that might ensue, made Gentlemen come to a sort of compromise with themselves. "We are sensible of certain defects; we feel certain inconveniences in the present state of Representation; but fearing that we may make it worse by alteration, we will be content with it as it is." This was a sort of argument to which he could not give his countenance. If Gentlemen had at all times been content with this sort of average, the nation would have lost much of that excellence of which our Constitution now had to boast. Who would say but that the excellence of the Constitution was the fruit of constant improvement? To prove this fact required but little illustration. It was, for instance, a first principle in our Constitution, that Parliament should meet as frequently as the exigencies of the State should require. This was a clear principle

principle, but the periods were not fixed.—Practice, however, had improved on this principle, and now it was established that Parliament should annually meet.

Something like that which he meant now to recommend, did take place in very early periods of our history. It was remarkable that James I. with all his high notions of discretionary power, stated, in his first Proclamation for calling a Parliament, that the Sheriffs of the Counties should not direct such Boroughs to send Members as were so utterly ruined as to be incapable or unentitled to contribute their share to the Representation of the Country. Another period of our history, which, whatever objection he might have to the general principles, had given rise to many salutary laws; he meant in the days of Cromwell; it was declared by the Protector that there should be a greater proportion of Knights than of Burgesses in the House of Commons. He mentioned this authority, for which, as he had said, he had, in the general, no great reverence, (whose opposition to Charles I. began in licentiousness, and proceeded, as licentiousness always did, to tyranny) because it would shew, that whatever was his general respect for the Constitution of the Country, he clearly shewed that he thought Representation should be proportioned to the People represented. Lord Clarendon, in speaking of the Plan of Cromwell, had said, and it was to be found in his writings, “That it was
“ worthy

“worthy of a more warrantable authority, and
“of better times.” From these circumstances,
he thought that a doubt could not be left on
the mind, but that it always had been the prin-
ciple of Representation that it should change
with the changes which the country might en-
dure, and that it should not be merely confined,
as he had said, to exterior and locality.

Feeling, therefore, that this was the clear prin-
ciple of Representation, he begged the House to
remember, that he had told them in the outset
that his Plan was free from the objection of al-
tering the number of the House, and also from
the objection of making any change in the Bo-
roughs by disfranchisement: his Plan consisted
of two parts; the first was more immediate
than the other, but they were both gradual.
The first was calculated to procure an early, if
not an immediate change of the Representation
of the Boroughs; and the second was intended
to establish a rule, by which the Representation
should change with the changes of the Country.
It was the clear and determined opinion of every
speculatist, that there should be an alteration of
the present proportion between the Counties
and Boroughs, and that in the change, a larger
proportion of Members should be given for the
populous places, than for places that neither had
property nor people.

It was therefore his intention to submit to the
House, to provide, That the Members of a cer-
tain

tain number of Boroughs of the last description, that is, of Boroughs decayed, should be distributed among the Counties. He would take the criterion, by which he should judge what Boroughs were decayed, from the number of houses; and this was a mode of judgement which was not liable to error, and which he conceived to be perfectly consistent with the original principle of Representation. He should propose, that these Members should be transferred to the Counties, beginning with those that stood in the greatest need of addition. The nature of such a Reform as this was in its nature limited; for, if once the standard for the lowest County was fixed, the proportion for all must be the same, and it would be impossible to add more for any one County than for the rest. In this view of the business, he imagined that the House would agree with him in thinking that there were about thirty-six Boroughs so decayed, as to come within the scheme of such an operation. Seventy-two would therefore be the number of Members to be added to the Counties in such proportion as the wisdom of Parliament might direct, and this number it was his intention to propose should be fixed and unalterable. The operation must be gradual, as he intended that the Boroughs should be disfranchised on their own voluntary application to Parliament. Gentlemen must be aware that a voluntary applica-
tion

tion to Parliament was not to be expected without an adequate consideration being given to the Boroughs; and he trusted that Gentlemen would not start at the idea of such a consideration being provided for. A Reform could only be brought about by two means—by an act of Power, or by an adequate consideration which might induce bodies or individuals to part with rights which they considered as a species of valuable inheritance, or of personal property. To a Reform by violence he, and he was sensible many others, had an insurmountable objection; but he considered a Reform in the Representation of the People an object of such value and importance, that he did not hesitate in his own mind to propose and to recommend to the House the establishment of a fund for the purpose of purchasing the franchise of such Boroughs as might be induced to accept of it under the circumstances which he had mentioned.

It might be asked what the consideration could be for such a franchise. He knew there was a sort of squeamish and maiden coyness about the House in talking on this subject; they were not very ready to talk in that House on what, at the same time it was pretty well understood, out of doors they had no great objection to negotiate, the purchase and the sale of seats. But he would fairly ask Gentlemen, if these sorts of franchises were not capable of being appreciated? and whether, notwithstanding all the

proud boast of its being an insult to an Englishman to ask him to sell his invaluable franchise, there were not abundance of places, where, without imputing immorality to any individual, such franchises might not be purchased? Could it not be proved that in this Country estates so situated as to command an influence in a decayed or depopulated Borough, and to have the power of returning two Members to Parliament, sold for more money than they would have done if situated in any other place, however luxuriant the soil might be, however productive its harvests, unless its harvests could occasionally produce a couple of Members, its intrinsic value was less. There were many reasons why men might be induced to surrender this franchise; in some instances, where the right of returning Members was attached to the possession of an estate, and where it might be considered as an inheritance, giving to the possessor the power of doing so much good to his country, he might warrantably and honourably accept of a valuable consideration, since by the use of the equivalent he might be equally serviceable to the community. In some instances, persons enjoyed the franchise in consequence of a life right, and enjoying it only for their lives, interest would naturally induce them to accept of a consideration; others enjoyed it by a still more temporary tenure, merely by the circumstance of local confidence, and to them therefore it must be an opportunity

opportunity which they will covet to embrace. Viewing the matter, therefore, in these points of view he had no doubt, in his own mind, but that the Boroughs to which he alluded would voluntarily surrender their franchise to Parliament on such consideration being given. He should propose that the fund to be established should be divided into two parts, and that it should be stipulated that a larger sum should be given for perpetuities than for temporary rights. He had stated before, he said, that this operation would not be immediate, at least to the full extent; but he had reason to believe that it would neither be slow nor distant.

The second part of his plan was to provide, that after the full and final operation of the first proposition, that is, after the extinction of thirty-six Boroughs, and the transference of their Members to the County Representation, if there still should remain any Borough so small and so decayed as to fall within the size to be fixed on by Parliament, that such Borough should still have it in its power to surrender its franchise on an adequate consideration, and that the right of sending the Members to Parliament should be transferred to such populous and flourishing Towns as might desire to enjoy the right, and that this rule should remain good, and operate in all future time and be applied to such Boroughs as in the fluctuating state of a manufacturing and commercial kingdom might fall

fall into decay in one part of the Country, and rise into condition in another. These propositions, taken together, comprehended what he conceived to be a final and complete system, and which would ease the minds of Gentlemen with respect to any future scheme of Reform being attempted, or being necessary. This was not a plan of Reform either fluctuating or changeable. It was not subject to the argument, that the stirring this question would lead to endless innovations, and that when once involved in change, there was no foreseeing where we might stop; nor was it subject to the objection that it was an innovation; for he had very much failed in making his own ideas intelligible to the House, if he had not shewn them that it was a plan in every respect congenial, not only with the first principle, but with the uniform practice of the Constitution. These arguments, therefore, he trusted, would not be brought against his plan. The argument, whether his propositions were practicable, whether they were susceptible of an easy and early execution, he should be happy to hear and to discuss. But all the arguments that had from time to time been brought against general and unexplained notions, as they were not applicable, he trusted they would not be adduced.

He anticipated several objections, which, when the propositions came to be discussed in the detail, he should be happy to meet and to combat. The first, he supposed, would be the argument

of the expence; certainly it would always be wise and proper for that House to guard against wild and chimerical schemes and speculations, which might involve their Constituents in additional burdens; but he did not believe that in a matter so dear and important to Englishmen, they would be intimidated from embracing it by the circumstance of the cost. He conceived it to be above price: it was a thing which the people of England could not purchase too highly. Let Gentlemen set the question in its proper point of view; let them oppose to the expence, however great, the probable, and indeed the almost certain, advantages to accrue from it, and then they would see how little the argument of œconomy ought to weigh against the purification of the popular branch of the Legislature. If there always had been a House of Commons who were the faithful stewards of the interests of their Country, the diligent checks on the Administration of the finances, the Constitutional advisers of the Executive Branch of the Legislature, the steady and uninfluenced friends of the People, he asked, if the burden which the Constituents of that House were now doomed to endure, would have been incurred? Would the People of England have suffered the calamities to which they had lately been made subject? And feeling this great and melancholy truth, would they consider the disbursement of any sum as an object, when, by doing so, such

a House of Commons might be ascertained? He did not, therefore, think that the argument of the expence would be much insisted on, nor indeed would the expence be so great as, on the first blush of the matter, Gentlemen might be apt to imagine.

Another objection that he forefaw was, that the operation would be but gradual, and its full and final accomplishment at least be distant.— This, however, was not an objection that could have much weight. He did not believe that the operation would either be slow or very distant: he had stated to the House several reasons, to shew that the different descriptions of men would have an interest in accepting the conditions to be offered by Parliament; and in the fluctuating state of property, and in the almost constant necessities of men, he argued like a man of the world in saying, that the offer of the consideration would from time to time be irresistible. He was sanguine perhaps in saying, that, before next Parliament, the benefit of this plan might be felt, and in the mean time, this objection of the plan being gradual, would be less regarded, from the confidence which the People of England had in their present Representatives. They would wait with patience for the operation of this arrangement, from the confidence which they had in the truth and character of the present Parliament. It was elected under circumstances which made it dear
to

to Englishmen; it had not yet forfeited the confidence of the Country; and he was warranted in saying, that, with such a House of Commons, the Constituent Body would not be eager for the immediate accomplishment of this Reform.

He said, that in the proposed change of Representation, and in adding seventy-two Members to the Counties, he forgot in the proper place to mention, that it was his wish to add to the number of the Electors in those Counties. There was no good reason why Copyholders should not be admitted to the exercise of the franchise as well as Freeholders. Their property was as secure, and, indeed, in some instances, more so than that of the Freeholders; and such an accession to the Body of Electors would give an additional energy to Representation. He conceived that the addition of seventy-two Members would be as much as it would be proper to give to the proportion between County and Borough. These seventy-two Members would be divided between the Counties, and the Metropolis, as nothing could be more evident than that the Cities of London and Westminster, as well as the Counties, had a very inadequate share in the Representation of the kingdom. To give to the Counties and the Metropolis a greater addition than seventy-two Members, or thereabouts, would be the means
of

of introducing disorders into the election more injurious than even its present inadequacy.

. He needed not, he believed, to enumerate the arguments that presented themselves to his mind in favour of a Reform. Every Gentleman who had taken pains to investigate the subject, must see that it was most materially wanted. To conquer the corruption that existed in those decayed Boroughs, he believed that Gentlemen would acknowledge to be impossible. The temptation were too great for poverty to resist, and the consequence of this corruption was so visible, that some Plan of Reforming the Boroughs had clearly become absolutely necessary. In times of calamity and distress, how truly important was it to the People of this Country that the House of Commons should sympathise with themselves, and that their interests should be indissoluble? It was most material that the People should have confidence in their own branch of the Legislature; the force of the Constitution, as well as its beauty, depended on that confidence, and on the union and sympathy which existed between the Constituent and Representative. The source of our glory and the muscles of our strength were the pure character of Freedom, which our Constitution bore. To lessen that character, to taint it, was to take from our vitals a part of their vigour, and to lessen not only our importance but our energy with our neighbours.

If we looked back to our history, we should find that the brightest periods of its glory and triumph were those in which the House of Commons had the most complete confidence in their Ministers, and the People of England the most complete confidence in the House of Commons. The purity of Representation was the only true and permanent source of such confidence; for though occasionally bright characters had arisen, who, in spite of the general corruption and depravity of the day in which they lived, had manifested the superior influence of integrity and virtue, and had forced both Parliament and People to countenance their Administration; yet it would be unwise for the People of England to leave their fate to the chance of such characters often arising, when prudence must dictate that the certain way of securing their properties and freedom was to purify the sources of Representation, and to establish that strict relation between themselves and the House of Commons which it was the original idea of the Constitution to create. He hoped that the Plan which he had mentioned was likely to re-establish such a relation; and he recommended to Gentlemen not to suffer their minds to be alarmed by unnecessary fears. Nothing was so hurtful to improvement as the fear of being carried farther than the principle on which a person set out.

It was common for Gentlemen to reason with themselves, and to say that they would have no objection

objection to go so far, and no farther, if they were sure, that in countenancing the first step, they might not either be led themselves, or lead others farther than they intended to go. So much they were apt to say was right—so far they would go—of such a scheme they approved—but fearing that it might be carried too far, they desisted from doing even what they conceived to be proper. He deprecated this conduct, and hoped that Gentlemen would come to the consideration of this business, without fearing that it would lead to consequences that would either ruin or alarm us. He begged pardon for having troubled the House so long, he wished to put them in possession of all his ideas on this important subject, though he was aware, that until the matter came to be argued in the detail, it was impossible for him to foresee all the objections that might be started. He should therefore conclude for the present with moving,

“That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the Representation of the People of England in Parliament.”

Mr. DUNCOMBE rose to second the motion. He said, that if after the sense of the People on the subject of Reform had been so clearly ascertained, the Minister had not come forward and proposed some measure upon the subject, he must have expected but a small share in future of that grace and confidence at the hands of the
Constituent

Constituent Body, which was in fact a Minister's best support. It was a new and interesting object, he said, to see the Minister of the Crown standing forth in this zealous and patriotic manner, the advocate of the People. The measure which had been proposed fully and compleatly met his ideas and those of his Constituents; and it answered the solicitude of the People so perfectly, that he should consider himself as highly unworthy of his situation, as one of their Representatives, if he satisfied himself with a silent vote on the occasion. He paid many compliments to the Author of the Propositions, and said, they were what had been long and ardently desired by all the true lovers of the Constitution; it was on these grounds he rose to second the motion.

Mr. Powys thought the question of the highest possible importance, but not on the principles of the Right Honourable Gentleman; for it was no longer a measure proposed by any of the individuals in the House, but by the government of the country. Ministers had owned it: and the House were now to determine, whether they were to acquiesce in this ministerial effort to alter the Constitution, or from respect to their own dignity, to reject that which was only conjecture for what they felt to be fact. He said, the Right Honourable Gentleman had, with his usual elegance and force of expression, pronounced a funeral oration on the Constitution

of his country, which, however, he celebrated as the most excellent in the world, as the envy and perfection of human wisdom, but which at the same time he consigned to a mere immortality of fame by putting an end to its present existence. Thus that form of Representation which had now lasted and operated to general and palpable advantage, and been the constant boast of Englishmen, was, notwithstanding, the object of the Honourable Gentleman's jealousy and mistrust. Confidence in this very object, a sound and operative love of the Constitution, had, in the best and greatest men, in the most prosperous and purest times, produced effects which we could never forget. Zeal was, perhaps, an essential characteristic in reformers. He was willing for one to give the Right Honourable Gentleman full credit for the earnestness and solemnity with which he had brought forward the Plan of Reform, about which there had been so much guess and conjecture in the dark. He knew not how to speak of the caution with which the system had been concealed. He for one would not censure that part of the Right Honourable Gentleman's scheme. He was sure of a majority, perhaps, who were ready to adopt whatever he thought most proper to bring forward. He would be glad, however, to hear how certain Gentlemen were prepared to coincide with Principles which, in his opinion, they could not adopt, without, in the first place, virtually renouncing

renouncing what they had already avowed. He owned himself very much at a loss to conceive how one, or many, could comply with a system calculated to operate only by slow and imperceptible degrees, who were in so much haste in the matter, as to declare repeatedly, that there was not a moment to lose: others, as it struck him, could with still less propriety adopt this plan, who were the advocates of a general Reformation. But now the proposal, which in its object aimed at circumscribing the influence of the Crown, originated with his Majesty's Ministers, and courted the sanction of the House under a Royal Patent. He was not, however, for one, fond of trials which might make us worse, but could hardly make us better. He did apprehend danger from a plan thus plausible, and urged with all that eloquence and masterly address in which the Right Honourable Gentleman had deservedly so much credit with the House. No man admired those talents which he possessed more than he did. He thought no man better qualified to do his country the most essential services than he was. But he was not prepared to say the same approbation was in all respects due to the application of his eminent abilities. He ridiculed the rage of Reforming, which affected as a malady the present day. It reminded him of the ancient reformer Procrustes, who, in order to equalize the human race, had a bed of iron of a standard size, and on his reforming

principle he put persons who were too long, and stretched those who were too short to the size of the bed. But at the time he pronounced them abortive; and wished to know from the Right Honourable Gentleman which of these he imitated, or by what other motive or principle he could be guided in hazarding the very extraordinary ideas he had pressed on the House.— Had the People of England called for a Reform? There were but eight petitions on the table. He did not wish to encroach on the time of the House, but he could not help begging a little of their attention to the Petitions which had been presented to the House in favour of this Reform. The first one to which he referred was that from Nottingham. This, with a consistency which he deemed characteristic of the business, set out with asserting their entire confidence in the House of Commons.

Yet a Reform in this House constituted the prayer of their Petition. Their exceptions he thought singular. The expression was to him perfectly unintelligible. What did they mean by *inadequacy*? This was the only defect they pointed out in the present system of Representation. But they did not say in what that system was inadequate, or specify any of those purposes in which it had failed. This very urgent Petition was only clear and expressive in one general desire, and that was no less than to *model the character and genius of the nation.* The next

next to which he called the attention of the House was that from the City of York. But the requisition of this was not in any degree affected by what had been suggested by the Right Honourable Gentleman. It went, in his opinion, to very different matters, though he understood it to be the work of the great and venerable leader and commander in this political crusade. He mentioned Norwich, which prayed for the General Reform of the whole Representative Body; and by that means assumed to themselves the honour of representing the Community at large. The conclusions which he wished to establish by those references, were, that either there were no Petitions before the House which had Reform for their aim, or where any such Petitions of that kind existed, the Reform which had been mentioned was not conformable to the spirit and tendency of the allegations which they contained. He asked how any man, who had but a tolerably good opinion of the present House of Commons, could come forward with a Plan which supposed their insignificance. He asked if the present House were expected, or ready to adopt such an act of humility and self-abasement. The Right Honourable Gentleman's favourable opinion of the present Parliament was well known. The panegyric which he had pronounced on them now, was an echo to that which they had received from the Sovereign at the commencement of the Session; for all the

House would recollect the passage. He did think it something extraordinary that the rage for a Reform should be chiefly directed to that very Body which had been thus repeatedly, officially, and, he trusted, deservedly praised. They were allowed to possess the confidence both of King and Country, and to be guided equally by their loyalty to the Crown, and their attachment to the interests of the People. He was anxious to know by what other principles than these they could be guided. Could a Parliament be better than disposed, on all occasions, to do their duty with honour to themselves, and fidelity to their Constituents? He was also disposed to ask, whether the Borough Members were more or less inclined to do their duty than others. He remembered that a noble Lord, nearly related to the Right Honourable Gentleman, (Mr. T. Pitt, now Lord Camelford) had once made a motion in that House which did him infinite honour; which would have done honour to the Representative of the first County in the kingdom. It was, "That this House is *bound* to listen to the Petitions of the People." This surely did not make him appear to be a man who had separate interests from them; and yet he was not, at the time he made that motion, the Representative of a County, or great Town, he was Member for Old Sarum, one of those Boroughs doomed, by the Right Honourable Gentleman's Plan, to be disfranchised.

chised. He then read over extracts from a pamphlet, published by Lord Camelford, in which he stated, that if any other influence in the kingdom was to be constantly shifting and changing, the influence of the Crown, which alone was permanent, would soon drive all the rest before it. He observed, that if the franchise of decayed Boroughs was to be given up, the Right Honourable Gentleman ought to set the example to the rest of the nation, by the sacrificing at the shrine of Reform the Ordnance, Treasury, and Admiralty Boroughs. He acknowledged there had been many untoward circumstances, within our recollection, which had attended the operations of Government. But he asked whether these unfortunate events might not have taken place, had the Boroughs been without Representatives. The fluctuation of a State so circumstanced as that of Great-Britain was, did not, in his opinion, always depend on the Constitution. The prosperity or advantage of it would undoubtedly vary under the best, as well as the worst. He regretted the melancholy consequences of the American War as much as any one could do; but would it be said, that war depended on the Representatives of the Boroughs? He presumed few, even of those most forward in the scheme of a Reform, would venture to go all the lengths to which their reasoning however went. He did not choose to go into the detail of the scheme

thus

Cc 3

thus subjected to the consideration of Parliament. He would not be rash in deciding on the Rights of those who regarded their interest in Boroughs with any degree of tenacity. But this much he would say, that no pecuniary consideration whatever should dispose him to forego the privilege, and the glory of having it in his power to introduce to the service and attention of his Country the Right Honourable Gentleman.—Much stress had been laid on the corruption of the times. That, he trusted, was not the language of experience. With what degree then of decency could the Right Honourable Gentleman say, in the face of so popular a Parliament, that the House of Commons cannot, unless reformed, convey the sense of the nation? A late Administration, it might, perhaps, be said, had been an Administration of Corruption; and upon its ruin was raised an Administration of *Opinion*; and a good opinion unquestionably must be entertained of it, when it was known that it did not entertain or cherish any one who had been formerly an Agent of Corruption.—[At this ironical expression there was a loud roar of hear! hear!]

—This compact and well-informed Body was calculated to do justice to all the principles of the Constitution. He was aware how the principle which was thus dignified with the name of a new one, would affect the very privileges which it was intended to guard. The first object of it was to compliment the

the

the majority with the sale of the minority.— On the whole, he owned great apprehensions from the first concession. It was dangerous in all cases, but particularly so in this. He implored the Right Honourable Gentleman to think what he was about, to beware how he acted, and regard the experiment which he was now to try, with delicacy and circumspection. No man could foresee precisely its effects; they struck him as alarming in no common degree. Nothing could persuade him even for a moment to wish the Propositions he had laid down the smallest attention, except he could indulge his curiosity at such a vast and important hazard as to wish to see the scheme put to the proof. He thought in his own mind, and judging of mankind as they had always appeared to him, that his boasted principle might do infinite mischief; but there was little probability of its producing any good whatever. Innovation was to be dreaded, and avoided as much as possible in all establishments. The Right Honourable Gentleman had laboured to satisfy the House that his system was final, and that it set bounds to the speculative reformatations of all future Theorists. This he said, but he did not prove it.— It was, on the contrary, an example, a precedent, perhaps an excitement, to the wildest and most paradoxical nostrums they could either devise or apply. It placed them, in fact, on an advantageous ground. They got by it what

Archimedes

Archimedes wanted, a foundation to their inventions, a fulcrum from which they could throw the Parliament into the air. It was impossible, in his opinion, to view the subject with any degree of patience. He thought himself as much master of it, from having only heard it stated, as if he had revolved it in his mind for years. He would not, therefore, vote for the order of the day, or treat it with any reserve or respect. Its purposes were, he foresaw, so hostile to the Constitution, so menacing even at a distance, and so unqualified, that he was clearly for meeting the question in the teeth, and giving it a direct and unequivocal negative.

LORD NORTH said, the Honourable Gentleman had given him comfort by what he had said in the conclusion of his speech, viz. That he would not agree to any concession, but would give the motion his direct negative. Undoubtedly that was the treatment the motion ought to receive, and it was the line of treatment he should himself adopt respecting it. Curiosity, he said, had, in more instances than one, greatly misled mankind, and he should have thought the Honourable Gentleman had given way to a most fatal curiosity, if he had rashly and unadvisedly countenanced for a moment a direct attack upon the British Constitution, a Constitution the work of infinite wisdom, the source of many blessings, much happiness, much glory, a Constitution richly deserving of that warm praise which the
Right

Right Honourable Gentleman had bestowed on it, in far better words than he was master of, and with a brilliancy and glow of eloquence that would have adorned the meanest subject of panegyric, but which was well employed when employed in decorating and describing the most beautiful fabric that, perhaps, had ever existed from the beginning of time. He never would give his consent to any attempt to tamper with such a fabric, unless a very strong case could be made out to prove it stood in need of some repair; that case had not yet been made out, neither had any the smallest shadow of proof been yet given that it required any assistance whatever. Of an existing evil he knew nothing; the blessings that had been derived under the Constitution he knew well; they all knew them; they stood recorded in the historic annals of the country; they had been felt for ages, they were felt at that moment. The Right Honourable Gentleman had talked of pride, of laziness, of timidity; perhaps out of the abundance of his civility, he meant to apply those words to him. Was it fair, that because he happened to differ from the Right Honourable Gentleman upon a great and an important subject, a subject in which they were all deeply and personally interested, in which the Country itself, and the Constitution that they were all so ready to extol, were deeply interested, because he happened to differ

differ from the Right Honourable Gentleman under a question of that magnitude, he was to be attacked and treated with a degree of harshness which was not, which could not, be merited by any Member of that Assembly : Was it pride when he was called upon to vote in support of a requisition, to be permitted to tamper with the Constitution, to say, shew me first the necessity? Was it laziness to say, when it was stated that a remedy was wanting, to insist on having the evil stated, to which that remedy is to be applied? Was it timidity, when called upon to unsettle the foundation of that glorious fabric, the work of his ancestors, to desire to pause before he consented, and to inquire why he should consent to undo it? His Lordship took notice of the manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had glanced at the American war. As that was not the subject of the day, and bore no sort of relation to the question then under consideration, his Lordship said he would not at that time go into a discussion of it; he would only repeat what he had often said before, viz. that whenever that question was properly brought forward he was ready to meet it, conscious, that though we had been unfortunate in the war, though the war had been calamitous to the country, no blame was ascribable to him on that account; the war was the war of the People, began at their instance, and at the instance of that House. Those were facts so undeniably true, that he wondered

wondered how any man was bold enough, in the face of those who were then sitting in the House, and knew the facts that he had stated so well, to start a doubt of them. Having said this, his Lordship returned to the immediate subject of the day, which he treated with great severity; he said, on a former occasion, when the Honourable Gentleman behind him had risen to reprobate the idea of tampering with the Constitution, (for that was the fourth, if not the fifth time, that it had been under discussion) but when the worthy Member for Northamptonshire had desired to have the Birmingham Petition read, those who were friends of what they called Reform, but what he should call Ruin, had sent a paragraph to the newspapers, stating that the Noble Lord in the blue ribband would not have long to boast of there being no Petitions, for there would soon be Petitions enow on the table. How happened it that there was no Petition from Birmingham now, nor in the whole no more than eight Petitions in all? The Right Honourable Gentleman, it was true, had said in his speech, that a Reform had been called for by the People, sometimes more, and sometimes less. He understood there were none. What then was he to conclude? That they thought it a hardship to be deprived of the privilege of sending Representatives to the House of Commons? No; but on the contrary, that they were indifferent about the matter; or, rather,

rather, that they did not wish for any such franchise. If it was otherwise, surely this would have been the time for them to make their exertions, when they were informed that the Right Honourable Gentleman would support their claims, both as a Man and a Minister; and when they were taught to believe that all England, with one voice, would second their application. But lo! they were totally silent on this head; and, what was not a little remarkable, their silence did not proceed from any indifference about their own interest; for when they thought that affected, they soon applied to that House by Petition, as in the case of the Irish propositions. It was fair to conclude, that they made themselves perfectly easy about a Parliamentary Reform, and were fully satisfied with the present state of Representation in that House. Against the Irish Propositions, Petitions had flowed in from all quarters. So aware was the Right Honourable Gentleman that the small number of Petitions that had been presented, necessarily created an argument against the motion, that he had thought it prudent to endeavour to weaken the force of that argument which he foresaw would be urged, by saying, with an indifferent air, that the Reform had been called for by the People, sometimes more, and sometimes less. What was he to understand from that observation? Was he to
take

take it as a proof that the People did really call for a Reform at that time? Was he so far to accommodate what they saw, and what they did not see, and to take both as a proof that the People of England wished for a Reform? The Petitioners who had subscribed the Petitions that were on the table, certainly did wish for a Reform; and if he were to admit that those who had not petitioned equally wished for a Reform, it was going a good way to meet their wishes, because in admitting so much, they spoke by their presence, and by their absence; by their prayers, and by their silence. Well might he say with the man in the Rehearsal,

What horrid found of *silence* doth assail mine ear?

His Lordship said, the people of Birmingham were wiser than to call for any innovation in the Constitution. As little did he believe the majority of the people, in any part of the kingdom, wished for a Reform. A Member of a considerable County (Suffolk) had in all newspapers addressed his Constituents for instructions how he should vote on the question of Parliamentary Reform; but though he addressed them very early in the present session, his Constituents had been so very indifferent about the matter, that they had not to this moment sent him any instructions on the subject. He knew there had been a Meeting summoned in the first City in
the

the Empire, by special notice, for the express purpose of instructing their Representatives; and there he was informed, though the Meeting and the business of it had been publicly announced, and was of general notoriety, only 300 attended. When they were about to instruct one of their Representatives, he declared his readiness to obey his Constituents, but had expressed a wish that he had seen more of them present at the Meeting, because he felt some difficulty in proceeding to act, as 300 instructed him, when, by the absence of 8000 of his Constituents, he was induced to imagine, that they did not very highly approve of the business they were convened upon. His Lordship said, he was aware that one Gentleman present at the Meeting had said, in answer to what he had just stated, that the eight thousand who were absent, meant by that very circumstance to signify their concurrence in any Resolution the three hundred should come to. This was, his Lordship said, rather a curious sort of logic, as he believed the House would readily agree; but it was not a whit more extraordinary than the idea, that the People of England were to be supposed to wish really for an alteration in the state of Parliamentary Representation, when they did not ask for it. He reminded the House of the Circular Letters of Mr. Wyvill, and of the great pains that had been taken to stir the question in all parts of the kingdom. If therefore the People
in

in general really desired any alteration, they would have petitioned in great numbers from most of the different Towns for it. His Lordship entered into the ancient history of Parliaments, and stated the degrees and gradations Parliament had passed through from their first institution, accounting for the discretion of the Crown that had been formerly exercised, by stating, that originally the Chiefs in Feu, who held of the Crown, and were liable to suit and service, were summoned, and being at the time Chief Tenants of the Crown, were at the will of the Crown assembled either wholly or partially. Afterwards, when they divided their lands, property became more dispersed, and money grew more scarce; in consequence of which, the lesser Barons were spared, on account of their inability to bear the expence of Parliamentary attendance. Again, at a subsequent period, another change was made; after that another, and, by degrees, Parliament was settled on its present footing, where, his Lordship said, he heartily hoped it would long be suffered to remain, and not be disturbed on account of any chimeras, that entered the brains of visionaries and speculatists, who were not, he verily believed, aware of the serious mischiefs they had employed themselves about. All the idea of the necessity of a Reform, he was persuaded, was the mere vapour of a dream, the shadow of a shade, empty whim and fanciful nothing, from which the Right Ho-

VOL. II. D d nourable

nourable Gentleman was endeavouring to conjure up something; but he relied on the good sense and sound reason of the majority, trusting that they would break the spell, and prevent the magicians from practising on a subject that ought to be held sacred. His Lordship said, even admitting for the sake of argument, and he should not wish to be thought serious in admitting for a moment, that any alteration was actually necessary; yet he should contend, that the alteration proposed was not adapted to the feigned evil. He begged to know where there existed in Europe, or on the face of the globe, a People so happy as those who lived under the British Constitution? Where was there a People so fully in possession of their Rights and Liberties? The fact was undeniable? What mattered it then whether the persons who sat in that House, the Guardians of the Public Freedom, sat by virtue of having been elected for a Burgage Tenure, a Borough, or a County? While the People's Rights were secure, and their Liberties safe, why was it necessary to go into a minute inquiry how they came to be secure and safe? The means were provided by our ancestors, and had been sanctioned by experience, the test of truth. His Lordship said, the Right Honourable Gentleman, like a quack, was desirous of having the dose swallowed, whether the Patient had any disease or not, and, like a true Empiric, would insist upon it that his pill was a specific, and

and would cure Patients in all cases, and under all circumstances. The subject was too serious to be ludicrous upon, but he would just state, that the Right Honourable Gentleman reminded him of the Mock Doctor in Moliere's Farce. He said, he supposed the Speaker had either seen or read the book, and would recollect, that a man's daughter is supposed to be *dumb*, and he sends for a Physician to cure her. The Doctor comes, and soon restores the girl to the use of her tongue, which she exercises at such a rate, that the Father offers him another fee to make her dumb again; when the Doctor replies, "he can't do that, but, if he pleases, he'll undertake to make him *deaf*." Having set the House in a roar, his Lordship again returned to argument, and said, it was of late become a custom to catch hold of a strong epithet, and apply it to any particular phrase that was meant to be made use of to deceive and delude the People. Thus he had heard of the spirit of Liberty, the spirit of Freedom, and the spirit of the Constitution; what was meant by the latter, as applied at Popular Meetings, he knew not, nor did he believe those who used it knew themselves. For his part, he had always conceived that the spirit of the Constitution was to be looked for, and found in the Common Law of the Land, and in the practice and usage of Parliament. It was enough, in his opinion, for the People to be happy and free. With regard to the *idea* of the Country

D d 2

Gentlemen

Gentlemen making a considerable part of that House, the idea was a very just one: he was ready to admit the bulk and weight of that House ought always to be in the hands of the Country Gentlemen, who were, undoubtedly, the best and most respectable objects of the confidence of the People. Their disinterestedness, their virtue, their public spirit, he admired: they were fitted by their education and their situation in life more peculiarly for Members of Parliament, than almost any other description of men in the kingdom; besides, they had the greatest stake in the Country after all, and were the most deeply interested in its welfare: because, let what would happen, Men of business and manufacturers could go and get their living elsewhere; but a Country Gentleman could not quit his Native Country, because he could not carry his estate away with him. But, for God's sake, had not the Country Gentlemen their share in the Representative Body at present? Was it merely the Representatives of Counties that were now Country Gentlemen? Let any Man look round the House at the moment, and then let him say whether he did not see many very respectable characters, who were Country Gentlemen, Representatives of large Boroughs. He said, the general cohesion of the several branches of the Legislature were now by all so settled, so firm, and its general operations so practicable, that he must be a Quixote who would

would strive to change its aspect. There was a reference which not only beneficially resisted the influence of the Crown against the People, but which even protected the People against the consequences of momentary delirium in themselves. His Lordship ended with an emphatic wish, that the Friends of the Constitution would feel as one man, and arouse at the danger it would be put in, if the present motion was carried; he therefore hoped they should have the triumph of carrying it in the negative; for if a door was once opened to innovation and experiment, there was no knowing to what extent it might be carried. He gave the Right Honourable Gentleman full credit for not intending, if he should prove so successful as to carry the present motion, to go any farther; but the Right Honourable Gentleman could only answer for himself. Other Ministers might make what the Right Honourable Gentleman had done, a plea for doing something more; and again, other Ministers after him, till there would be no end to innovation and experiment.

Mr. WILBERFORCE remarked, that the dread of innovation seemed so much to prevail in the minds of certain persons, that, in order to avoid it, they took care to reject even any new ground of argument, and the House was now entertained with a repetition of the same observations and the same jokes which they had so often heard before on similar occasions. There was,

he said, one peculiar excellence in the Plan now submitted by his Right Honourable Friend, which no attempt had been yet made to dispute, and which indeed was liable to no objection. This was that system of gradual and progressive improvement which must proceed to rectify and meliorate the state of Representation, according as those circumstances should arise on which it was intended to operate. It would also tend, in his opinion, to diminish the progress of party and cohesion in this Country, from which, he was well convinced, our greatest misfortunes arose. There were Men and Parties in this Country, which derive most of their power and influence from these Burgage Tenures, against which the operations of this Bill were to be directed. By destroying them, the freedom of opinion would be restored, and party connections in a great measure vanish: for the consequence of coalitions, and parties formed on one side of the House was, that similar engagements were necessarily formed on the other; and for his part, he wished to see the time, when he could come into the House and give his vote, divested of any sentiments of attachment, which should induce him to approve of measures from his connection with men. The objection made to this Bill from its not making provision for the reduction of Treasury Boroughs, did not by any means apply, as no person could tell by these Boroughs might be the first objects of the operations

operations of the Bill; those Boroughs had been long objects of jealousy to him; and he declared, that every merit this Bill possessed, in his opinion, would be much diminished were not the Ministerial Boroughs to be of that number which were likely to come first under these regulations. He made several remarks on the effect such a system as this would have had on the Americans; and argued, that under such circumstances, the war could not have been endured nor so popular. He reasoned also with Mr. Powys on parts of his speech; and said, one of his arguments was such as no human creature ought to have urged: [a cry of hear! hear! arising at this] Mr. Wilberforce immediately explained, and said, what he meant was, that to desire that a known and acknowledged evil might continue, merely that good might come out of it, was such an argument, as, in his opinion, no rational being ought to maintain.— He concluded, with explaining the circumstances of the Yorkshire Petition, which he declared he would not have recommended had he been consulted, thinking it totally unnecessary from the application which had been before made to Parliament on the subject. The best proof that the opinion of the nation at large was for a Reform, needed no other confirmation, than that no Petition had been presented against it.

Mr. Powys explained in answer to the remark, which he conceived improperly directed to him,

which drew a reply from Mr. Wilberforce, stating that he meant nothing personal in the allusion : after which,

LORD MULGRAVE said, that nothing was more desirable in such a question as the present, than that every endeavour should be used to obtain unanimity. The noble Lord declared his hope, that the motion might either be carried unanimously, or rejected; because he thought if it were carried, and there appeared a considerable minority against it, it would lead to infinite mischief. His Lordship said, if the majority thought with him, they would reject it, as he saw great danger in countenancing any attempt to build up and erect a Constitution on speculative Propositions. His Lordship declared, he approved of the Propositions better in the shape in which they stood in the motion, than in any shape that they had before been brought forward in. He also praised Mr. Pitt's eloquence as displayed in his speech, in the warmest terms; but entered an elaborate protest against any endeavours to new mould the Constitution.

Mr. Fox said, after the many occasions on which he before expressed what his sentiments were on the subject of a Reform in the Representation, he should not consider himself under any great necessity of troubling the House; if there had not been extraordinary circumstances attending the introduction of the present question.

sition. That he had always been a friend to the principle of this bill, was a fact which did not require to be now repeated. Whether the means taken to effect that principle were such as were most unexceptionable, must remain for future discussion; but could not provoke his opposition to the motion. There remained ample opportunities in the stages of the bill to examine and correct it; opportunities which in themselves would be the highest acquisition. In the review which had been taken of the question this night, there were means used to implicate the American war in the subject now under discussion, by suggesting that it was supported by the influence of burgage tenures, and that if they had been withdrawn, that war would have had a more speedy termination.— He acknowledged that it would have been in the power of the Parliament to bring that war to a period, had they considered it as an improper one; but the manner in which it must have been done would be such, as he should little expect to hear recommended from the Gentlemen on the other side of the House.— When the delay of a few days in passing the supplies was represented last year as the most heinous proceeding, what would have been the enormity of stopping not only the ordnance supply, as was the case, but all the other supplies also, as would be the case in the event mentioned by the Right Honourable Gentleman, viz. the active

active interference of the House of Commons to put a period to a war. This would be a conduct worthy of a House of Commons, in certain situations, and would shew them to be sensible of their due weight and importance in the scale of the Constitution, and not the instruments of a superior power, kept for no other purpose but to register edicts, and to perform an annual routine. Much had been said of the merit of dissolving that cohesion which was said to subsist in the parties in that House. That cohesion did subsist, was a truth in which he took too much pride to think of denying, and from which this country derived too much advantage to be an enemy to; his connections were formed on liberal and systematic principles, and could not be dissolved by any regulations, while the same union in sentiment and principles continued to cement them. When an Honourable Gentleman said, that parties formed on one side of the House occasioned similar engagements on the other, he should have considered, that it equally applied to one as the other. But there might be some circumstances which might induce that Honourable Gentleman to look forward with eagerness to the dissolutions of such attachments, if they obliged him to support and defend measures in which his opinions did not correspond; if they found him to act one way and think another. Under such circumstances it was perfectly natural that he should pant to
be

be disengaged from such connections, and resign
 the load which seemed so much to oppress him.
 To that principle which, by a diminution of the
 Members for Boroughs, tended to increase the
 proportion of Representatives for Counties, he
 was sincerely a friend. But while he was thus
 explicit on the subject of his approbation, it was
 but just to mention, that there was another point
 to which he totally disagreed: with all respect,
 which he always paid to a House of Commons,
 and among the rest to the present House, he
 could perceive in it no superlative excellence, no
 just superiority which could justify the suspension
 of the operation of this bill. To defer for the
 period of six years any system of Reform, how-
 ever partial and inadequate, was by no means
 complying with the declared wishes of the ma-
 jority of the Electors of this Country—whose
 voice, though by no means to be acknowledged
 as that to which the House of Commons must
 conform, when they were directed by any sudden
 impulse, as the opinions of a moment, should
 always be obeyed on points which the experience
 and consideration of years had taught them
 finally to decide upon. The people, notwith-
 standing all that had been said, had no peculiar
 obligations to this Parliament for uncommon
 instances of that propriety of conduct, which
 could warrant so implicit a reliance on it. No
 very flattering proofs of extraordinary attention
 to the Rights of the People had been given by
 his

his Majesty's present Ministers, in their support of that excellent measure, the Westminster scrutiny; and no very splendid testimony of their prudence in financial concerns could be drawn from the Commutation tax. This was a proceeding, the hardship of which they already felt; and there were some others now in agitation, which were not likely to turn out much more favourable. These only were the reasons the People could have for a reliance on the present Parliament. He did not, however, mean to say any thing which could be construed into invective against them; he had before been accused of insulting them; he did not know that he did so—but if heat should have led him at any time to say any thing which could have that appearance, he was exceedingly sorry for it.—There was nothing in any of these circumstances which could impress them on his memory; but he had observed, that nothing he ever said in his warmest moments had ever drawn forth so much passion and ill temper on the other side of the House as when he attempted to praise them. The Right Honourable Gentleman had, in this instance, receded from these opinions, which on two former occasions he seemed to maintain, and the alteration which he now made, for the purpose of a specific Plan, was infinitely for the worse. It was in vain that he endeavoured to qualify the objections which the idea of innovation raised in the minds of some, by diminishing the
the

the extent and influence of Reformation. From the earliest periods of our Government, the principle of innovation, but which should more properly be called amendment, was neither more nor less than the practice of the Constitution. In every species of Government (putting absolute Monarchy out of the question, as one which ought never to take place in any country) Democracy and Aristocracy were always in a state of gradual improvement, when experience came to the aid of theory and speculation. In all these, the voice of the People, when deliberately and generally collected, was invariably sure to succeed. There were moments of periodical impulse and delusion, in which they should not be gratified, but when the views of a People had been formed and determined on the attainment of any object, they must ultimately succeed. On this subject the People of this Country had petitioned from time to time, and their applications were made to their Parliament. For every reason, therefore they should be gratified, lest they might be inclined to sue for redress in another quarter, where their application would have every probability of success, from the experience of last year. Failing in their representatives, they might have recourse to prerogative.

It had been urged, that now, while this business was in agitation, the People of Birmingham and Manchester had not petitioned to be represented.

presented. This was an argument which at this time, of all others, could have but little weight; for while they were alarmed for their trade, and their subsistence, it was no time for them to set about making improvements in that Constitution, in which they were not certain how long they might have any share. On the eve of emigration, they were to look for this in another Country, to which their property and business were soon to be transferred. The different parts of this Plan would certainly, in a Committee, be submitted to modification and amendment; but as it now stood admitting only the first principle, every other part, and the means taken to attain the principle, were highly objectionable. He should not hesitate to declare, that he would never agree to admit the purchasing from a Majority of Electors the property of the whole. In this he saw so much injustice, and so much repugnance to the true spirit of our Constitution, that he could not entertain the idea for one moment. On the other hand, when the property of a Borough was in one man, there was no chance of his disposing of it, on the terms this day mentioned. For when a particular sum was laid down for a particular purchaser, and interest suffered to accumulate on that sum, the man must be a fool, who could be in haste to get possession of it. There was something injurious in holding out pecuniary temptations to
an

an Englishman to relinquish his franchise on the one hand, and a political principle which equally forbade it on another. He was uniformly of an opinion, which though not a popular one, he was ready to aver, that the right of governing was not property, but a trust; and that whatever was given for Constitutional purposes, should be resumed, when those purposes should no longer be carried into effect. There were instances of Gentlemen offering to sacrifice the interest they might have in Boroughs, to the Public good. He expressed, however, his surprize that the present proposition was not attended by any liberal offers from those whom Government had loaded with honours, and whose connection with the present Administration should naturally excite an expectation of something more liberal than a procedure by mere bargain and sale. He was averse to the idea of confining Parliamentary situations to men of large fortunes, or those who had distinguished themselves in public professions. Should this be the case, there was scarcely any man so little acquainted with the history of Parliament, as not to know, that the House would lose half its force. It was not from men of large and easy fortunes that attention, vigilance, energy, and enterprize were to be expected. Human nature was too fond of gratification not to be somewhat attentive to it when the means were at hand; and the best
and

and most meritorious public services had always been performed by persons in circumstances removed from opulence. The Right Honourable Gentleman need not be ashamed to take some of those regulations formed in the time of the Protector Oliver Cromwell. For though a character too odious ever to be the object of praise or imitation, his statutes, confirmed afterward by his successor, Charles II. bear the strong marks of genius and ability; for his political disposition was as good as that of his successor, and his genius infinitely more powerful. He concluded with earnestly entreating all sides of the House to concur in the question now before them. He was sorry the Honourable Gentleman who spoke before him (Mr. Wilberforce) did not in all the warmth he professed on the occasion, take the most conciliatory mode of acquiring strength to it. Instead of reproaching the Noble Lord (North) for confining himself to old arguments and observations, he should rather tremble for the success with which these old observations had been applied by his noble friend, and the contrary fate which had before attended the novel and more variable stile of the Minister.

The Right Hon. HENRY DUNDAS thought it his duty to state some of those reasons to the House which induced him to declare himself a sincere friend to this question.—[A very hearty laugh.] He was not at a loss, he said, to account
for

for the merriment which Gentlemen seemed to possess ; but in his declaring himself a friend to the measure, he wished to be understood as supporting a specific proposal. He had objected only to those general and unexplained schemes under which the House was to be converted into a project-shop, and they were to hold Committees of Consultation on the Diseases of the Constitution. Against such dark ideas he had always set himself ; but to the present plan, which was a single and complete act, which went not only to an immediate, but to a constant Reform of the Representation, which would not only cure the present, but the radical defects in the fabric of Representation, he was inclined to give his most hearty support ; and he repeated his declaration, that he was sorry that any thing had been introduced into the debate so totally abstracted from the business as the question of the American war. The American war was the War of the People ; and on that occasion it was not the construction of the Parliament which gave it rise, but the general feeling of the People, and which was declared through their Representatives. It was not the noble Lord in the Blue Ribband who was the author of that war ; he did no more than execute the ideas of the people, and in his mind, if he was blameable in any thing it was for executing those ideas with less ardour than they were expressed.

He said the present Propositions were free from all the objections which had lain against the former

mer plans. The sacred inheritance of property was not to be violated, and men were not to be outraged by peremptory conditions. No man, or set of men, were to be forced to enter into the scheme, unless they approved of the conditions, and yet such were the conditions, that he had no doubt but they would be soon accepted.

Mr. BURKE, after entertaining the House for a considerable time on the Right Honourable Gentleman's (Mr. Dundas) conversion from the principles of anti-reformation, proceeded to discuss the merits of the present question, as well as the manner of bringing it in. It offered one alternative, either to adopt this limited, confined Plan of Reform, or be perhaps liable to receive one from the Duke of Richmond, on a more enlarged scale. Between the Minister and the House of Commons, there was the same species of conduct, as if a robber should enter the house of a man, and say, "Let me take away such things as I please, and I shall lock the door, and keep out any other thieves: but if you refuse the offer, then take your chance of losing all." The doctrine which had gained so much ground, and in conformity to which this plan had now been introduced, was that of universal Representation. But this measure was only an illusion, from which no solid benefit would ever result. The influence of the Country Gentlemen in Parliament was always known to preponderate, when they were united in opinion. The respectability which attended

a man of landed property, called for the most part into a situation which was in itself disagreeable, and rather a situation of duty and constraint, than an object of ambition. These circumstances added so much to the importance of these Members, that the advocates of every measure were glad to boast of them as their supporters. Where then was the prudence of throwing into that scale, in whose power the balance already was, that share of power which was pretended to be the means of keeping all parts of the House on the same level. He took a very extensive view of the present state of Representation, and asked if the Proprietors of Boroughs had not been already sufficiently paid in the profusion of the honours of this Country, without now opening the purse of the nation. He particularly adverted to the conduct of a Reverend Gentleman (Mr. Wyvill.) He took particular notice of the variety and extent of his correspondence, which he said was not confined to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or to the Volunteers of Ireland. Lord Shelburne and Mr. Macgrugar had not been forgotten; and other celebrated names had been handed down to posterity by this reforming divine. After reading several extracts from this correspondence, he proceeded to remark that the Right Honourable Gentleman who had formerly submitted to the House two plans for a more equal Representation of the People, each of which was perfection itself, now comes forward with a

third, still more perfect than either of the former. He would allow that the present plan had many more palliatives in its composition than either of its brethren, for its operation was not likely to affect any of the Members of the present Parliament; and he could not sufficiently admire the address of the Right Honourable Gentleman, in thus rendering his plan palatable to all parties. For his part, he considered the whole of it as mere delusion, an *ignis fatuus*, calculated to mislead and to bewilder. He insisted that the Right Honourable Gentleman had abandoned the ground on which he originally took up this question.

LORD FREDERICK CAMPBELL delivered an eulogy on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but declared he could by no means, consent to countenance any alteration in the Constitution. The door once opened for innovation and experiment, the wisest among them could not say where it would end.

MR. ROLLE was also decisively against the motion. If it was suffered to pass that House, there was no security for its being thrown out in the other House; for how could he tell but a new Lord, or a new set, might be made on purpose to carry it, if it went up there? There were, Mr. Rolle said some Persons sitting in a certain Place, who had no more right to sit in that House than his groom.

The Attorney General (MR. ARDEN) supported the motion, entering into a recapitulation of several of Mr. Pitt's arguments, and answering

swering several things that had been said on the other side the question. Mr. Attorney General, in the course of his speech, said there might be persons impudent and indecent enough to declare, that he had no more right to sit in that House than their groom.

Mr. YOUNG observed, that had he been in a situation to attract the Speaker's notice in an earlier stage of the debate, he should probably have, in some degree, expatiated on the very wide field which the Right Honourable Gentleman had opened to the House; that now much of his work had been done, much he should have urged had been anticipated, and much he should pass over from a sense of already knowing how greatly the patience of the House had been wearied, and how particularly he was indebted to their present attention. That among his former inducements for offering himself to the notice of the House was, that not having had a seat in Parliament when the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his former Propositions, it suited best with the temper of his mind in the first stage of this important business to take an open and decisive part; nor could he esteem the part he took premature, inasmuch as every man of liberal education, and surely every Member of that House must, in a great degree, be not only competent to the question, but in these times, and when that question had been so much agitated, must have turned his thoughts to the subject, and must

have grounded thereon a decisive opinion.— That he was more particularly induced to rise at the present moment from the learned Gentleman who spoke last having taken up anew what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the opening of the debate, and who, as in feeling himself on the strongest ground of argument, had repeated—“ who, if legislating anew for this country, would form this House as existing in its present system of Representation?” That it rather should be asked who could have imagined and framed such a Constitution? The work not merely of time, as had been stated, but of the most extraordinary series of events, and which could be laid to no account but that of a special Providence! Nor was the question without personal application, more modern allusions apart. It had been agitated by the greatest political historian of antiquity; that great and wise writer, Tacitus, doing as the Right Honourable Gentleman had done, remounting to first principles, and tracing thence the abstract theories of the regal, aristocratic, and democratic branches of Government, introduced, as the result of his researches, this remarkable sentence—“ *Cunctas nationes, aut reges, aut primores, aut populus regunt, dilectæ aut confociata Reipublicæ forma laudari facilius quam evenire, aut si eveniat, non diuturna esse potest.*” That learned and penetrating historian could not presume the duration of a commonwealth consisting of these mixed states; he knew that the

the *momentum* of the democracy, whether acting by the body of the People, or by a Representation unqualified and adapted purely to popular ideas, must quickly bear down one or both of the other branches of Government; and had it been moreover told him, that in this pure and direct Representation of the numbers of the People were to originate the resources of war and peace, the *primum mobile* of public revenue, the doubts of Tacitus would not have been hypothetical; such a state, he could not have pre-conceived to exist a moment. This was not a time of night to trace those errors back to their source, and in a history from the Courts *de More*, through the progression of Parliamentary growth, to mark the grounds of mistake; that he should, therefore, join issue with the Right Honourable mover on the actual and existing state of Parliament. The errors of the Right Honourable Gentleman were derived from a similar source with the difficulties of Tacitus; the Representation of the People was his favourite expression, but if he meant a Representation of poll or numbers, and so every point of his Reform implied, he said, we were not the Representation of the People, but of the People's interests. The consistency of that House was qualified by the equipoise of the landed, the commercial, and the popular interest.— This proportion of balance could not be shifted but with danger to the Constitution of the Country; adding to one of these principles

might, in the end, be subversive of the very existence of that House, which, loaded with a new and false bias, might be thereby directed to some gulph of ruin now unforeseen; that at this point of the argument he must take occasion to answer the Attorney General, when he asked, "Is there a man in this House, who, fairly and in his conscience, rejects the principle of adding to the County Members?" The answer was, "I do, and I do in fear that some spirit may be infused into this body, not congenial therewith, and which may affect the vitals and corrode the very main spring that regulates its motion; and I do, from other motives, and motives which, if well founded, deserve the most serious attention of this House." Much has been said of the cohesion of parties, much on the other side of individual independency, and of mouldering away every connection of men in that House: in the present state of public manners it was not to be apprehended, that to buy or to retain would lapse into disusage, or that a Minister might not engage a consistency of support to his measures. The Right Honourable Gentleman might anticipate, perhaps, the application of the famous sentence in Montesquieu,—“But was there no other corruption but venality?” He feared a worse, and of more fatal tendency, than the holding out merely places of public trust to men of ability and adventurers in policy, were these County Members to be added. In one light,
they

they must be men who had come into that House on the great landed interest of a County, and in a County, perhaps, there was as much undue influence as at an election for any Borough : when seated there, some future Minister might find it necessary to attach an authority to his support, become thus numerous and weighty; the coronet was only his bribe, his only attraction to men of this description ; and an attraction, as experience proved, not often resisted. Thus, perhaps, in a short succession of Ministers, much more of the great landed interest would pass into the House of Lords, there ever accumulating, and rarely or never returning. The consequence was obvious ; the great landed interest the People would ever look up to in their Counties, and in the national Councils ; to them would their confidence be directed, to them their petitions addressed, and under all the circumstances it were idle to say, that the revenue and money bills should not then originate there ; whilst that House, fallen into disrepute, and even to derision, might sit idly disputing about unimportant matters, or matters they had scarcely weight to interfere in, and idly attended by forty Members, instead of the very numerous assembly that dignified the present question. On the call of additional County Members, other, and as dangerous, circumstances might arise, from causes widely different and of different tendency. He alluded to the adventurous

adventurous Candidates, who opposed the aristocracy of a County, and who, to secure an election, might feed the prejudices of the commonalty, might sign tests, and pledging themselves to every self-injurious prepossession, might find their way into that House under engagements, and with abilities too, backed by the popular clamour to urge new claims, new reforms, fresh innovations. The Right Honourable Gentleman had adduced, as favourable to his reform, that its principle was completed in his plan, and was thus final; the Right Honourable Gentleman might answer for himself, but who would say, that a new man should not propose a new mode; and having cut down the prescriptive barrier of the Constitution of that House, would he not leave a breach open for every forlorn hope, *qui crumenam perdidit*, to enter and rifle at pleasure? And the more was this to be feared, as prejudices of the People might join too under the precedent to aid those who, by such ruinous means, would seek to push him from his stool; for it could not be said that the present plan came up to the present declarations of the Reformers. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, that leaving the Constitution in its present state, was tending to weaken the ~~love of the~~ People to their Country; a more proper application might be made of those words; to *innovate*, is tending to weaken the love of the People to their Country; it was tending to
weaken

weaken that confidence in that House, in a word that attachment to the old British Constitution, which arose from a prescriptive veneration, and which could not belong to a new system; much of patriotisin, and its most essential force, was founded on habitual regard, and local and long prepossessions; these were what gave a force or character, even to those who lived in, and were prejudiced to Countries, whether under the physical disadvantages, as the Laplander, or under political, as France, when compared with our clime and Constitution. He closed with observing on an expression of Mr. Powys, tending to give the idea, that the business was brought forward by Government, and as a ministerial measure. He could not look upon it in that light; he had supported, and should continue to support that Administration, from a just sense of the abilities, and a full confidence in the integrity of the Minister; an integrity which, even in the speech which he reprobated, gave a more beauteous glow and colour to the very luminous display with which the Right Honourable Gentleman had ornamented his subject; but that, if on such a question, so touching the dearest and most important interest of every Englishman, he could surrender his conviction even to the tendered influence of the Right Honourable Gentleman's dearest partiality, or most honourable friendship, he should esteem himself not only unworthy to
fit

fit in that House, but even in the company of any honourable and good man whatever.

Mr. BANKES paid very high compliments to his Right Honourable Friend, but he said he could not accede to the motion. Had it been a motion for a Committee, he would have voted for it, as he had regularly voted for the other questions. Mr. Bankes by no means approved of purchasing the Boroughs with the Public money.

Mr. Chancellor PITT closed the debate in a few words in reply to what had fallen from Mr. Bankes, as Mr. Bankes's objection had been singly started by himself. Mr. Pitt professed a very sincere friendship for the Honourable Gentleman, and said, it gave him sensible pain to find he differed with him upon ground which he thought so extraordinary.

At about a quarter before four in the morning, the House divided on the question, Ayes, 174 ;—Noes, 248.—Majority against the question 74.

*A correct List of those Members who voted with
the Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT, on the above
Motion for a Parliamentary Reform.*

| | |
|--|---|
| William Charles Sloper, Esq; <i>St. Albans, Hertfordshire</i> | John Lowther, Esq; <i>Cockermouth, Cumberland</i> |
| Richard Pepper Arden, Esq; <i>Aldborough, Yorkshire</i> | Sir Wm. Lemon, <i>Cornwall county of</i> |
| Nicholas Bayley, Esq; <i>Anglesea</i> | J. W. Heneage, Esq; <i>Cricklade, Wilts</i> |
| Rich Penn, Esq; <i>Appleby, Westmoreland</i> | Robert Nicholas, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| Robt. Beckford, Esq; <i>Arundel, Sussex</i> | William Lowther, Esq; <i>Cumberland</i> |
| Wm. Wrightson, Esq; <i>Aylesbury, Bucks</i> | Edw. Miller Mundy, Esq; <i>Derbyshire</i> |
| Hon. John Jesseries Pratt, <i>Bath city of</i> | Fran. John Browne, Esq; <i>Dorsetshire</i> |
| Sam. Whitbread, Esq; <i>Bedford town of</i> | Robert Preston, Esq; <i>Dover, Kent</i> |
| William Colbourn, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Hon. James Luttrell, <i>ditto</i> |
| The Right Hon. Lord Delaval, <i>Barnard Castle, Northumberland</i> | Sir Charles Davers, Bt. <i>St. Edmundsbury, Suffolk</i> |
| Sir C. Sykes, Bart. <i>Beverley, Yorkshire</i> | John Bullock, Esq; <i>Effex county of</i> |
| John Nicholls, Esq; <i>Blechnely, Surrey</i> | Sir John Ruthout, Bart. <i>Everham, Worcestershire</i> |
| Charles Morgan, Esq; <i>Brecon county of</i> | Char. W. B. Rous, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| Wm. Hawkins Brown, Esq; <i>Bridgeforth, Shropshire</i> | Peter Bathurst, Esq; <i>Eye, Suffolk</i> |
| Alexander Hood, Esq; <i>Bridgewater, Somersetshire</i> | John Grant, Esq; <i>Fowey, Cornwall</i> |
| Charles Sturt, Esq; <i>Bridport, Dorsetshire</i> | Right Hon. Lord Newhaven, <i>Gatton, Surrey</i> |
| Henry Cruger, Esq; <i>Bristol city of</i> | John James Hamilton, Esq; <i>St. Germain, Cornwall</i> |
| John Aubrey, Esq; <i>Buckinghamshire</i> | John Baynes Garforth, Esq; <i>Hasternere, Surrey</i> |
| John Cull, Esq; <i>Callington, Cornwall</i> | Thomas Pofflethwaite, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| Paul Orchard, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | John Dawes, Esq; <i>Hastings, Suffolk</i> |
| Right Hon. Isaac Barre, <i>Catne, Wiltshire</i> | Right Hon. Lord Mildord, <i>Haverford West, Pembrokehire</i> |
| Sir Hen. Peyton, Bart. <i>Cambridgeshire</i> | John Scudamore, Esq; <i>Hereford city of</i> |
| Right Hon. Earl of Euston, <i>Cambridge University</i> | William Plumer, Esq; <i>Herefordshire</i> |
| Right Hon. William Pitt, <i>ditto</i> | Edw. Bearcroft, Esq; <i>Ilton, Wilts</i> |
| James Warwood Adeane, Esq; <i>Cambridge town of</i> | Right Hon. Sir George Yonge, Bart. <i>Honiton, Devonshire</i> |
| George Gipps, Esq; <i>Canterbury city of</i> | Sir George Collier, Kt. <i>ditto</i> |
| Charles Robinson, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Right Hon. Earl Ludlow, <i>Huntingdonshire</i> |
| Right Hon. Earl of Surrey, <i>Carlisle city of</i> | Benjamin Bond Hopkins, Esq; <i>Ilchester, Somersetshire</i> |
| John Parry, Esq; <i>Caernarvonshire</i> | Wm. Middleton, Esq; <i>Ipswich, Suffolk</i> |
| Thomas Steel, Esq; <i>Chichester city of</i> | Char. Alexander Crickett, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| George White Thomas, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Hon. Charles Matham, <i>Kent</i> |
| Right Hon. Lord Apsley, <i>Cirencester, Gloucestershire</i> | Filmer Honeywood, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| John Lee, Esq; <i>Clithero, Lancashire</i> | |

- Samuel Thornton, Esq; *Kingston-upon-Hull, Yorkshire*
 Walter Spencer Stanhope, Esq; *ditto*
 James Hare, Esq; *Knaresborough, Yorkshire*
 Ab. Rawlinson, Esq; *Lincoln, Lincolnshire*
 Right Hon. Lord Arden, *Launceston, Cornwall*
 John Peach Hungerford, Esq; *Leicester, Leicestershire*
 John Macnamara, Esq; *Leicester, Leicestershire*
 Charles Loraine Smith, Esq; *ditto*
 John Lunter, Esq; *Leominster, Herefordshire*
 Hon. John Eliot, *Leicester, Cornwall*
 John Thomas Ellis, Esq; *Leicester, Cornwall*
 Thomas Kemp, Esq; *Lezard, Suffolk*
 Brook Watton, Esq; *Lezard, Suffolk*
 Sir Watkin Lewes, Kt. *ditto*
 Nathaniel Newnham, Esq; *ditto*
 John Sawbridge, Esq; *ditto*
 Richard Payne Knight, Esq; *Lichfield, Shropshire*
 Clement Taylor, Esq; *Maidstone, Kent*
 Gerard Noel Edwards, Esq; *ditto*
 Right Hon. Lord Waltham, *Maiden, Essex*
 Right Hon. Lord Vise. Maitland, *Maiden, Wiltshire*
 Sir Tho. Rich, Bart. *Marlborough, Bucks*
 C. Hawkins, Esq; *Marlborough, Cornwall*
 Evan Lloyd Vaughan, Esq; *Marsden, Yorkshire*
 John Wilkes, Esq; *Middlesex*
 William Mainwaring, Esq; *ditto*
 Right Hon. Lord Monckton, *Milford, Somersetshire*
 John Morgan, Esq; *Milcombe, Devonshire*
 John Sutton, Esq; *Newark, Nottinghamshire*
 Archibald Macdonald, Esq; *Newcastle, Tyne, Staffordshire*
 Charles Brandling, Esq; *Newcastle, Northumberland*
 John Parrington, Esq; *Norton, Hunts*
 Sir Edward Alley, Bart. *Norfolk*
 Hen. Pierie, Esq; *Norfolk, Norfolk*
 Sir J. Langham, Bart. *Norfolk, Norfolk*
 Right Hon. Lord Compton, *Northampton, Northamptonshire*
 Chas. Meadows, Esq; *Northampton, Northamptonshire*
 John Luxmore, Esq; *Outland, Devonshire*
 Right Hon. Lord Robert Spencer, *Oxford, Oxfordshire*
 Sir William Dolben, Bart. *Oxford, University of*
 John Macbride, Esq; *Plymouth, Devonshire*
 John Smyth, Esq; *Pontefract, Yorkshire*
 Right Hon. John Burgoyne, *Preston, Lancashire*
 Geo. Bower, Esq; *Quebec, Kent*
 John Aldridge, Esq; *ditto*
 Right Hon. Earl of Inchiquin, *Ramsey, Yorkshire*
 Charles Dundas, Esq; *ditto*
 Sir C. Middleton, Bart. *Ramsey, Kent*
 Nathaniel Smith, Esq; *ditto*
 George Bridges Brudenell, Esq; *Ramsey, Lancashire*
 Wm. Billingham, Esq; *Rye, Sussex*
 Sir Rich. Hill, Bart. *Rye, Sussex*
 Hon. John Villiers, *Old Sarum, Wiltshire*
 George Hardinge, Esq; *ditto*
 Right Hon. Earl Tyrconnel, *Rye, Wiltshire*
 Sir John Henderson, Bart. *Rye, Wiltshire*
 Hans Wintrop Mortimer, Esq; *Rye, Wiltshire*
 Sir Cecil Bithop, Bart. *Rye, Wiltshire*
 John Hill, Esq; *Shrewsbury, Shropshire*
 Edw. Phelps, jun. Esq; *ditto*
 James Amyatt, Esq; *Southampton, Hampshire*
 H. Thornton, Esq; *Southampton, Hampshire*
 Paul Le Mesurier, Esq; *ditto*
 R. B. Sheridan, Esq; *Stafford, Staffordshire*
 Henry Cecil, Esq; *Stafford, Staffordshire*
 Sir J. Honeywood, Bart. *Stafford, Staffordshire*
 Ja. Gordon, Esq; *Stafford, Staffordshire*
 William Smith, Esq; *Stafford, Staffordshire*
 John Langton, Esq; *ditto*
 John Grigg, Esq; *Suffolk*
 Sir Joseph Mawbey, Bart. *Surrey*
 Hon. William Norton, *ditto*
 Rt. Hon. Lord Henry Lennox, *Surrey*
 Rt. Hon. Richard Fitzpatrick, *Surrey*
 Alexander Popham, Esq; *Taunton, Devonshire*
 James Martin, Esq; *Taunton, Devonshire*

| | |
|---|---|
| Mr Philip Jennings Clerke, Bart. <i>Tariffs, Devonshire</i> | Hugh Dalrymple, jun. Esq; <i>Haddingtonshire</i> |
| Right Hon. Sir Lloyd Kenyon, Bart. <i>Treigny, Cornwall</i> | Sir Charles Preston, Bart. <i>Kingborn, Kirkaldy, Bruntisland, and Dysart</i> |
| Robert Kingmill, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Sir James Steuart Denham, Bart. <i>Lanerkshire</i> |
| Thomas Aubrey, Esq; <i>Wallingford, Berkshire</i> | Thomas Dundas, Esq; <i>Orkney and Zetlandshire</i> |
| Right Hon. Lord Hood, <i>Westminster City of</i> | Hon. James Murray, <i>Perthshire</i> |
| Right Hon. C. J. Fox, <i>ditto</i> | Wm. Mac Dowall, Esq; <i>Renfrewshire</i> |
| Mr Michael Le Fleming, Bart. <i>Wexford</i> | John Moore, Esq; <i>Selkirk, Lanerk, Peebles, and Lintithgow</i> |
| Right Hon. Lord Viscount Mahon, <i>Clipping, Wycombe, Buckinghamshire</i> | Sir Tho. Dundas, Bart. <i>Stirlingshire</i> |
| Mr John Jarvis, KB <i>Tarmouth, Norfolk</i> | W. Dalrymple, Esq; <i>Stranrazer, Wighton, Whitehorn, and New Galloway</i> |
| Henry Beaufoy, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | William Wemyss, Esq; <i>Sutherlandshire</i> |
| Henry Duncombe, Esq; <i>Yorkshire</i> | |
| William Wilberforce, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | |
| Right Hon. Vise. Gallway, <i>York City of</i> | TELIERS, |
| Richard Slater Milnes, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Robert Smith, Esq; <i>Nottingham</i> |
| Alexander Garden, Esq; <i>Aberdeenshire</i> | Hon. E. J. Eliot, <i>Leicester</i> |
| Hugh Montgomerie, Esq; <i>Abershire</i> | |
| Patrick Home, Esq; <i>Berwickshire</i> | PAIRED OFF. |
| James Campbell, Esq; <i>Culross, Dumfriesshire, Innerkeithing, Queen'sferry, and Stirling</i> | Daniel Pulteney, Esq; <i>Bramber</i> |
| Rev Campbell, Esq; <i>Dumbarton, Rutherglen, Glasgow, and Renfrew</i> | Robert Waller, Esq; <i>Clipping Wycombe</i> |
| Sir Robert Laurie, Bt. <i>Dumfriesshire</i> | J. Pollexfen Bastard, Esq; <i>Devonshire</i> |
| Sir James Johnstone, Bart. <i>Dumfriesshire, singular, Kinnaird, Lochmaben, and Annan</i> | Arthur Holdsworth, Esq; <i>Dartmouth</i> |
| Right Hon. Henry Dundas, <i>Edinburgh City of</i> | John Sinclair, Esq; <i>Leithwithiel</i> |
| | John Fenton Cawthorne, Esq; <i>Lincoln</i> |
| | Sir Harbord Harbord, <i>Norwich</i> |
| | John Stephenson, Esq; <i>Plympton</i> |
| | Hon. Edward Norton, <i>Carlisle</i> |
| | Abel Smith, Esq; <i>St. Germain's</i> |
| | Sir John Rous, <i>Suffolk</i> |
| | Samuel Smith, Esq; <i>Worcester</i> |
| | Gabriel Steward, Esq; <i>Weymouth</i> |
| | William Lygon, Esq; <i>Worcestershire</i> |

NUMBER XV.

Paper I.

Resolutions at a Meeting of the Committee of Association of the County of Surrey.

ST. ALBAN'S TAVERN, April 21, 1785.

Resolved unanimously,

THAT Captain John Porter be admitted a
Member of this Committee.

Resolved unanimously, That this Committee, impressed with the idea of the absolute necessity of a Reform in the Representation of the People in Parliament, feel the deepest concern in finding that the House of Commons have refused to give leave for bringing in a Bill on a motion of the Right Honourable William Pitt, for amending such Representation.

Resolved unanimously, That a transfer of the Right of Election from corrupt or decayed Boroughs, to Counties or populous Districts of Counties,

Counties, the Metropolis or great Towns, would be a considerable improvement to the present state of Representation.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the Meeting be given to the Right Honourable William Pitt, who moved; the Members of this County, and the other 173 Members who voted for the question for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Representation of the People of England in Parliament, on Monday the 18th inst.

Resolved unanimously, That the above Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and printed in the morning and evening papers.

JOHN SMITH BUDGEN,
Chairman.

Paper II.

Resolutions at a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Westminster Committee of Association, held at the King's Arms Tavern, Palace Yard, on Monday the 25th day of April, 1785.

Sir RICHARD HOTHAM in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously,
THAT a transfer of the Right of electing Members to serve in Parliament for small and inconsiderable Boroughs to the Metropolis, Counties, populous Districts of Counties, and great Towns of this kingdom, according to a due proportion, until a sufficient addition shall have been made to that part of the Representation, together with the admission of Copyholders and Leaseholders of certain descriptions, to the right of voting in the same manner as Freeholders now may in County Elections, will greatly contribute to remedy the abuses and defects in the present state of Representation, be a considerable improvement, and have a manifest tendency to secure the Rights of the People and the Principles of the Constitution.

Resolved,

Resolved unanimously, That this Committee earnestly conjure the inhabitants of the City and Liberties of Westminster, to persevere with unabated ardour in their efforts to obtain a fair Representation of the People, and a more constitutional duration of Parliament; and that this Committee will cordially co-operate with the Committees of Counties and Cities, and all other Public Bodies, friendly to a Reform in the Representation, and a repeal of the Septennial Act, in pursuit of those necessary measures.

Resolved unanimously, That such Representatives of the People as are Members of this Committee, be requested to attend in their places when Mr. Sawbridge proposes his motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments, and to exert their utmost efforts in support of that constitutional measure.

Resolved, That this Committee, impressed with the idea of the absolute necessity of a Reform in the Representation of the People in Parliament, feel the deepest concern in finding that the House of Commons have refused to give leave for bringing in a Bill, on the motion of the Right Honourable William Pitt, for amending such Representation.

Mr. Pitt's specific Plan of Reform, or the means proposed by him to obtain it, not being before this Committee,

Resolved, That this Committee decline at present to give any opinion on the merits of the same.

Resolved unanimously, That this Committee are sensible of the great advantages derived to the Public from an Act brought into Parliament by John Crew, Esq; for disqualifying Revenue Officers from voting in Elections of Members to serve in Parliament, by which the enormous and unconstitutional influence of the Crown has been materially diminished. But it appearing to this Committee, that, notwithstanding the salutary provisions of that Act, the Minister of the Crown still possesses a most extensive and alarming influence over certain Elections, from the number of persons dependent on the public Boards, and not disqualified by that Act. This Committee are of opinion, that until a substantial Reform of the Representation shall be obtained, that it is become highly necessary still further to diminish such influence by a Bill to prevent such persons from voting in Elections of Members to serve in Parliament.

Resolved unanimously, That the above Resolutions, signed by the Chairman, be published in some of the daily and evening papers.

RICHARD HOTHAM.

Paper III.

Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL to Dr. JOHN
JEBB.

NEROT'S HOTEL, May 6, 1785.

Dear Sir,

I SHOULD think it very unfortunate if my meaning were misunderstood by you; respecting any measure proposed for the support of the common cause, and therefore I wish to explain myself clearly on the subject of our conversation this morning.

I have thought, and I have found several other Gentlemen agreed with me in thinking, that something ought to be done soon to prevent the Public being discouraged by the repeated rejection of Mr. Pitt's motions for a Reform of the Representation; and also to unite, if possible, the active Friends of Reformation of all parties, and of every class of Reform, whether more or less extensive, in support of some specific measure, generally allowed by all those various descriptions of men to be right, or, advantageous to the Public. With this view I have taken the liberty to propose to you, and other

friends

Ff 3

friends of the cause, to meet to-morrow; and I have fairly and freely told you, and such other Gentlemen as I have had an opportunity to converse with, not only what my general purpose is, but also, that I hope the Meeting will think it is for the interest of the Constitutional Reformation we all profess to aim at, to hold up the leading Principles of the specific Plan lately proposed by Mr. Pitt, as meriting national support; though such approbation ought undoubtedly to be expressed in terms that would not convey any disavowal of those more general principles on which I contend, as well as you, that all free Government must be founded. But though you should not entirely accede to these opinions, I persuade myself to hope, there is nothing in all this which should prevent your honouring me with your company to-morrow, under the mistaken supposition that because you know my opinion, and also, that some of the Gentlemen invited concur in it, therefore all debate is, or is meant to be, precluded. I have honestly, though perhaps somewhat too bluntly, told you what I conceive the interest of the Public requires. Several other Gentlemen are also strongly impressed with the same opinion. If you should not be able to concur in any thing proposed on these grounds, I should lament so unfortunate a diversity of sentiments had taken place between us; and of the Public Cause should augur ill indeed in that case; but I certainly should acknowledge

knowledge that in rejecting whatever may be proposed by others in whole, or in part, or in proposing what may seem good to your own judgment, you had only done what may properly or regularly be done in every Meeting called as that at the Thatched-House has been, *without any specification of the matters proposed to be agitated at such Meeting.*

I am, Dear Sir,

With great regard,

Most sincerely yours,

C. WYVILL.

Paper IV.

Letter in reply from Dr. JOHN JEBB to the Rev.

C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

IF any thing could induce me to break through the resolution I had formed to decline appearing at a Meeting, the purpose of which you gave me to understand was to consider upon the proper means of enforcing

an union upon the principles of the Minister, your kind note of last night would have had that effect; but I will freely own some late occurrences have much alarmed me. They lead me to believe, that although the visible agents are actuated by the purest principles, and are totally unconscious as well as incapable of any sinister aim, something foreign to the main question, if not inimical to the real interest of the People, is intended, which may be revealed in its day.

In censuring the conduct of the majority of the present Parliament, and in animating the People to persevere in the demand of their undoubted right to short Parliaments and a fairer Representation, I would cordially concur. The stronger the language the more in harmony with my feelings. But an union upon Mr. Pitt's principles, although I would on no account be understood to reprobate the whole of his Plan, I cannot bring myself to approve. The extension of the right of suffrage to Copyholders is certainly just; and although I have objections to an increase of County Representatives, yet the transfer of the election franchise from decayed Boroughs to the Metropolis and large Towns, at present unrepresented, would certainly, when effected, be no inconsiderable advance towards constitutional perfection. Yet defects are evidently apparent upon the face of this system.

No

No provision as yet appears for the relief of such Boroughs as Bury, Yarmouth, Cambridge, Buckingham, &c. where reason requires, even upon Mr. Pitt's principles, that the right of suffrage should in them be extended far beyond its present limitations.

It is also an unsufferable objection in my mind that a long period of time must necessarily elapse before any effect of consequence can be produced by the operation of the principles proposed. The Country in the mean time may be ruined—the People totally enslaved.

I see also strong objections to the idea of depending for an improvement in the Representation upon the voluntary surrender of the present monopolizers, more especially as the Parliament we wish to Reform is itself to direct the circumstances of the purchase. With respect to the violated right of suffrage of the great collective body, Mr. Pitt represents it as a consideration of importance that all such views and prospects will be totally foreclosed by the adoption of his plan, which he proposes shall be final. I was indeed greatly concerned to perceive, that in a speech, certainly manifesting real abilities, and disclosing much Constitutional information, was also comprehended matter totally unfounded, and of the most dangerous tendency to the cause of Freedom.

As I am persuaded that a Reform when
effected

effected must take place in consequence of the active energies of the People of this Country, I should think myself guilty of countenancing themischief I apprehend, were I to go the lengths you seem to wish in support of the Minister's idea. I should not on any account be accessary to the obstructing of any real good he may propose to effect for the Country. My late conduct at the Westminster Committee, I trust evinces that real good I will cordially assist in promoting from whatever quarter it may proceed, at the same time that I am firmly resolved to oppose whatever I esteem dangerous to the cause of Freedom.

I will also freely own that the conduct of the House, upon Mr. Sawbridge's late motion, appears to me an additional argument for alarm. To that Gentleman, to Lord Surrey and to Mr. Martin, the country is greatly indebted for their manly conduct on that day: But did the silent vote of the Minister discover the proper warmth of attachment to the acknowledged Principles of the Constitution? The question you may answer applies equally to Opposition. Totally unconnected with Party; I feel no difficulty in acknowledging it applies to them, if possible, with greater force. Heaven grant the Constitution may meet with friends of a very different spirit in this its hour of danger, or English Liberties will soon become an empty name.

In Ireland as in a faithful mirror the real maxims
of

of the present Administration, respecting Political Liberty appear strongly reflected and in their native deformity; Attachments, restraints of the press, denial of the Right of the Subject to bear arms, rejection of the Reform Bill; in all of which the King's Attorney General acts a conspicuous part.

I certainly wish an union of the People, I will do all in my power to promote one upon a just and comprehensive principle. I will cordially support any reasonable and practicable plan, although it does not immediately proceed to the full extent of my own idea, provided the effectual Rights of the People are not reprobated in such plan, and all further improvements foreclosed; but I will never pursue a line of conduct which implies an approbation of Principles I abhor; a line of conduct which would dissociate very many approved Friends of the Constitution from our cause, and which vests implicit confidence in a man, who though justly respectable on many accounts, has openly avowed himself, and as openly acted as the Minister of the Crown.

For these reasons, and as my presence at a Meeting, where my voice in all probability would be discordant from the general tone, cannot possibly answer any good purpose—With the sincerest and most heartfelt respect for yourself and such of the worthy Gentlemen as I hear are to be of your company, I beg leave to decline complying

plying with your obliging invitation. Our cause I have no doubt will ultimately succeed—To the latest hour of my life I will exert myself with unabated vigour in its support, whatever may be the event with respect to my fortune or my fame. Happy if my conduct be such as shall approve itself to the friends of freedom and of public virtue, yet not destitute of sufficient consolation if deprived of every external species of support, and conscious only of the approbation of my own mind in the solitary hour.

I am very sincerely yours,

JOHN JEBB.

PARLIAMENT STREET, 7th May, 1785.

Paper V.

Paper V.

Resolution at a previous Meeting of Gentlemen,
Friends to a Reform of Parliamentary Representation,
held at the Thatched-House Tavern,
St. James's-Street, May 7, 1785.

PRESENT,

Earl of SURREY, Chairman.

| | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| Mr. Spencer Stanhope | Dr. Price |
| Lord Gallway | Mr. Polhill |
| Mr. Place | Mr. Borrett |
| Mr. Batley, sen. | Mr. Hawkins |
| Mr. Batley, jun. | Mr. Baynes |
| Mr. Redman | Mr. Fytche |
| Mr. Romilly | Mr. H. Tooke |
| Mr. Shore | Mr. Brand Hollis |
| Mr. Martin | Mr. Wyvill |

Resolved, That Mr. Wyvill be desired, in the name of the Gentlemen here present, to request of Mr. Pitt, that they may be favoured with a copy of his Plan for the Reform of Representation, for the purpose of calling a Meeting, on the 24th of this month, to take the merits of it into consideration.

SURREY.

Paper VI.

Paper VI.

Resolutions at a Meeting held at the Thatched House Tavern, St. James's-Street, May 24, 1785, called at the Requisition of several Gentlemen, Friends to a Reform of Parliamentary Representation, for the purpose of taking into consideration a Plan proposed by the Right Hon. WILLIAM PITT.

The Earl of SURREY in the Chair.

IT was moved, That a Reformation of the Representation of the People in Parliament, conducted on the principles, and to the extent stated to this Meeting in a paper read by the Chairman, entitled "A summary Explanation of the Principles of Mr. Pitt's intended Bill, for amending the Representation of the People in Parliament," would form a substantial improvement of the Constitution.

Which on a division passed in the negative: Ayes, 39; Noes, 63.

It was then resolved that the Proceedings of this Meeting be printed in the Public Papers, signed by the Chairman, with the names of the Gentlemen as they voted.

The

The following Gentlemen voted for the Question :

| | |
|---|--|
| Per John Andrews, <i>Marden, Kent</i> | Viscount Mahon, M P |
| Jackon Barwis, Esq; <i>Clapham, Surrey</i> | W. Middleton, Esq; M P <i>Suffolk</i> |
| — Batley, Esq; <i>Chapel-street</i> | Allington Morley, Esq; <i>Essex</i> |
| Idge Batley, Esq; <i>ditto</i> | Charles Polhill, Esq; <i>Chesham-Place, Kent</i> |
| John Baynes, Esq; <i>Embsay, Yorkshire</i> | George Polhill, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| Rev. — Brydges, <i>Kent</i> | Mr Alderman Picket, <i>London</i> |
| John Call, Esq; M P <i>Cornwall</i> | Samuel Shore, jun. Esq; <i>Norton-Hall, Derbyshire</i> |
| — Christian, Esq; <i>Temple</i> | William Smith, Esq; M P <i>Clapham, Surrey</i> |
| — Clayton, Esq; <i>Gray's-Inn</i> | Earl of Surrey, M P |
| St John Coghill, <i>Knarethorpe, Yorkshire</i> | W. H. Tamberell, Esq; <i>Chesham, Kent</i> |
| W. Dallison, Esq; <i>Hampton, Kent</i> | W. Tooke, Esq; <i>Serjeant's-Inn</i> |
| Thomas Day, Esq; <i>Auntingsley, Surrey</i> | John Horne Tooke, Esq; <i>ditto</i> |
| Ed Fytche, Esq; <i>Danbury Place, Essex</i> | — Turner, Esq; <i>Lincolnshire</i> |
| John Grant, Esq; M P <i>Berkshire</i> | — Urwin, Esq; <i>Nottinghamshire</i> |
| — Griffith, Esq; <i>Carnarvon</i> | P. C. Webb, Esq; <i>Hill-House, Surrey</i> |
| Joshua Grighy, Esq; M P <i>Drifftstone-Lodge, Suffolk</i> | — West, Esq; <i>Chatham-square</i> |
| — Hammond, Esq; <i>Hoydon, Surrey</i> | Rev. C. Wyvill, <i>Burton-Hall, Yorkshire</i> |
| Christ. Hawkins, Esq; M P <i>Cornwall</i> | TELLER—Walter Spencer Stanhope, Esq; M P <i>Cannon-Hall, Yorkshire</i> |
| Brand Hollis, Esq; <i>The Hide, Essex</i> | |
| R. H. Jones, Esq; <i>Lightam Lodge, Kent</i> | |
| Watkin Lewes, M P <i>London</i> | |
| Gabriel Lloyd, Esq; <i>Leeds</i> | |

The following Gentlemen voted against the Question :

| | |
|---|---|
| Robert Adair, Esq; <i>Lincoln's-Inn</i> | Sir H. Featherstonhaugh, Bart. M P |
| Mr Austin, <i>Knightbridge</i> | — Godfrey, Esq; |
| John Smith Budgen, Esq; <i>Surrey</i> | — Godfrey, Esq; |
| Col. Byron, <i>Portugal-street</i> | James Hare, Esq; M P |
| Hon. Tho. Broderick, <i>Lincoln's-Inn</i> | H. House, Esq; <i>Pall-Mall</i> |
| Gen Burgoyne, M P | Hon. Geo. Hanger, <i>St. James's-street</i> |
| Thomas Brand, Esq; <i>Soho-square</i> | Mr Harwood |
| Mr Bellamy, <i>Chandos-street</i> | Dr. John Jebb, <i>Parliament-street</i> |
| William Colhoun, Esq; M P | Jervois Clarke Jervois, Esq; M P |
| — Craythorne, Esq; <i>Yorkshire</i> | Col. Keating |
| John Courtenay, Esq; M P | Earl of Ludlow, M P |
| — Clavidge, Esq; <i>York-street</i> | John Mustet, Esq; <i>Catwick, Nottinghamshire</i> |
| Rev. Sir Collins, <i>Yorkshire</i> | Dennis O'Brien, Esq; <i>Craven-street</i> |
| — Dancer, Esq; <i>Temple</i> | John Phillips, Esq; <i>Temple</i> |
| Mr Thomas Dundas, Bart. M P | Rev. Mr Peach, <i>East-Sheen, Surrey</i> |
| Hon. George Fitzwilliam | Mr Parker |
| Right Hon. C. J. Fox, M P | Sir Rich. Rycroft, Bt. <i>Carlton, Yorkshire</i> |
| Right Hon. Rich. Fitzpatrick, M P | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Nelson Rycroft, Esq; <i>Lincoln's-Inn</i> | Hon. John Townshend, Whitehall |
| Sir John Ramsden, Bt. <i>Byrom, Yorkshire</i> | James Townshend, Esq; M P |
| — Royds, Esq; <i>Yorkshire</i> | Hon. Charles Wyndham |
| Nich. Rainsford, Esq; <i>Northamptonshire</i> | Sir Godfrey Webster, Bart. <i>B.L.</i> |
| George Reid, Esq; <i>Great Portland-street</i> | <i>Abbey, Suffex</i> |
| Hon. St. Andrew St. John, M P | Paul Wentworth, Esq; <i>Yorkshire</i> |
| John Sawbridge, Esq; M P | Mr Western |
| Sir F. Standish, Bt. <i>Buxbury, Lancashire</i> | Mr Walth |
| Col. Strickland | |
| A. H. Shove, Esq; <i>Lincoln's-Inn</i> | TELLER—Lord Maitland, M P |

The following Gentlemen, with others whose names could not be obtained, attended the Meeting, but it cannot be accurately ascertained whether they voted or went away before the division :

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Mr Biggins | Mr Morley |
| Mr Carne | Mr Peulse |
| Mr Cartwright | Mr Roach |
| Mr Green | Mr Stevens |
| Mr Glover | Mr Supple |
| Mr Leeves | Mr Tomlinson |

The following Gentlemen did not vote :

| | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Mr Duncombe, M P | Rev. Dr. Price |
| Mr Wilberforce, M P | Dr. Brocklesby |
| Mr Martin, M P | Mr Hanbury |
| Sir W. Foulis | |

SURREY, Chairman.

NUMBER XVI.

Paper I.

*Resolutions at a Meeting of Gentlemen, who
had agreed to form themselves into a Society for
Constitutional Information, held in London, in
April 1780.*

THE Gentlemen under-mentioned having
agreed to form themselves into a Society
for Constitutional Information, have
come to the following, amongst other
Resolutions; viz.

Resolved,
THAT this Society be called THE SO-
CIETY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL IN-
FORMATION.

Resolved, That this Society be unlimited in
its number; and that no one shall be esteemed a
Member, who hath not subscribed and paid at
least one guinea as an annual subscription to-
wards its expences; and no annual subscription
VOL. II. G g shall

shall exceed five guineas : and if any one shall choofe to compound by paying down fifty guineas, he shall be deemed a perpetual Member.

Resolved, That the annual fubfcription do commence on the first day of May of this present year.

Resolved, That all fubfcriptions and donations in aid of this Society be paid into the hands of T. B. Hollis, Esq; in Craven-street, Strand, until a Treasurer be appointed.

Resolved, That as soon as fifty Members are affociated, a General Meeting shall be called, when the several laws and regulations already agreed to shall be read over ; and confirmed, altered, or annulled. And at this Meeting there shall be elected a President, &c.

Resolved, That all Members, after the association of thirty is complete, shall be chosen by ballot, &c.

Ed. Bridgen, Esq.
R. Brocklesby, M. D.
Rev. Mr. Bromley
Major Cartwright
John Churchill, Esq.
T. Day, Esq.
John Frost, Esq.
T. B. Hollis, Esq.
J. Jebb, M. D.

C. Lofft, Esq.
Colonel Miles
R. Price, D. D.
Thomas Rogers, Esq.
R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
James Trecothick, Esq.
John Vardy, Esq.
Frederick Vincent, Esq.

*Paper II.**The First Address to the Public from the Society
for Constitutional Information.*

IN the venerable Constitution handed down to us, through a long succession of ages, from our Saxon and British ancestors, this is the basis and the vital principle—LAW, TO BIND ALL, MUST BE ASSENTED TO BY ALL.

And it was their felicity to have made that “best discovery of political wisdom,” whereby this assent of all throughout the realm was to be collected and carried into execution; namely, a freely-chosen, a full and equal REPRESENTATION. But it was foreseen, that to delegate the power of enacting Laws to a single assembly of Representatives, or to a single Council, or a single Magistrate, would be to establish at once a despotism; and to divide it between Two only, would not provide a lasting security against that evil; for that which should once acquire the ascendant, would necessarily render itself absolute. Hence it was wisely settled that the Legislature should consist of THREE distinct powers, with different gradations of dignity, and

G g 2

con-

consequently different individual interests; while the harmonizing of the whole should produce the good of the State: so that by reason of this diversity of individual interests, and the opposing sentiments and passions thence naturally excited, every matter proposed might be exhibited in all possible lights, and undergo a full and free discussion; and nothing become LAW, but thro' the medium of mature deliberation, and mutual concessions to that grand interest which was common to all.

These three powers we call King, Lords, and Commons.

It is on all hands agreed, that this institution of government is excellently adapted to the security of that FREEDOM which is *our common inheritance*. But this is only acknowledged, so long as each of these powers remains *independent* of either or both of the other two: for, if one of them should lose its independence, it is evident that our government, notwithstanding outward appearances, would consist of only *two powers*; and if *two* should lose their independence, it is equally evident that our government, although *three in form*, would in effect consist of only *one power*.

The moment that either the Crown, the Lords, or the Commons lose their independence, in that moment our Constitution is violated, our Government is overturned, and our Liberty is endangered.

As every Englishman has an equal inheritance in this Liberty, and in those Laws and that Constitution which have been provided for its defence; it is therefore necessary that every Englishman should know what that Constitution is; when it is SAFE, and when ENDANGERED.

To diffuse this knowledge universally throughout the realm, to circulate it through every village and hamlet, and even to introduce it into the humble dwelling of the cottager, is the wish and the hope of this Society.

They trust it is a wish that will be approved by all good men; and that it is a hope not ill founded, in a country whose love of Liberty is its characteristic, and where every thing generous, and in favour of that liberty, is congenial with the best and warmest feelings of the People.

So extremely simple are those first principles of our Constitution, upon which depends THE LIBERTY OF THE PEOPLE, that the Society are convinced any such institution as theirs had for ever been unnecessary, had not certain of our Parliaments, without authority, unjustly, and against their fidelity, despising the wisdom of the great founders of our Government and the Rights of their Constituents, departed from and violated this sound maxim of popular Freedom, that “To the bulk of any nation, destined to *labour* and not to *study*, to *act* and not to *speculate*, it is necessary to enjoy the *possession* undiminished, and the constant *exercise*

unabridged, of its legislative or ELECTION RIGHTS, as *the only possible means* by which it can preserve its liberty."

It has been justly observed by a distinguished writer, * that "When a PEOPLE have lost the power of legally asserting their Rights, they are exposed to that which is THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF POLITICAL RUIN, the loss of even *the remembrance* of them." And agreeable to the above maxim, another excellent author informs us, that "our Saxon forefathers established their government in Britain, before the transactions of mankind were recorded in writing, at least among the northern nations: they, therefore, handed down to posterity the principles of their government, BY THE ACTUAL EXERCISE OF THEIR RIGHTS; which became the ancient usage and custom of the People, and the law of the land. And hence it came to pass, that when this ancient custom and usage *ceased* to act, *the remembrance* of the custom ceased with it. We may add to this, that, since the Conquest, our arbitrary Kings, and men of arbitrary principles, have endeavoured to destroy the few remaining records and historical facts, that might keep in remembrance a form of government so kind, friendly, and hospitable to the human species †."

It

* De Lolme's Constitution of England, p. 210.

† Historical Essay on the English Constitution, p. 8.

It is the aim of this Society to supply, as far as may be, the want of those destroyed records, and to revive in the minds of their fellow-citizens, **THE COMMONALTY AT LARGE**, a knowledge of their lost Rights; so that, knowing the value of their inheritance, and the absolute necessity of exercising their Election Rights as extensively and as constantly as our sacred Constitution and its great founders intended, they may restore Freedom and Independency to that branch of the Legislature which originates from, represents, and is answerable to **THEMSELVES**.

That this Independency hath been unconstitutionally incroached upon, hath long, from its notoriety, been the public sentiment, and is now the public complaint: and even the Commons House of Parliament itself hath acknowledged both the justice and the necessity of this complaint, by its memorable vote on the 6th day of this month.

If there be any one cause of alarm to the People of England of greater magnitude than all others, it is such a confession as this on the part of their Representatives in the Legislature: it is big with solemn warning; it is full of serious admonition.

Hence all those who have a regard for their peace, their property, or their sacred laws; all who feel the tender affections of kindred, or

children, or parents; all who are friendly to society, or who love their country; who are inspired by gratitude to the founders and preservers of this Constitution, and who wish to leave it as an inheritance to posterity; are called upon by every consideration which can awaken sleeping virtue, or stimulate the breast to wise and generous actions for their own and their country's good, thoroughly to inform themselves what the Constitution IS; what is its present DANGER; and by what means it may be placed in SAFETY.

April, 1780.

Paper III.

*Paper III.**The Second Address to the Public from the Society
for Constitutional Information.*

WERE political evils as unavoidable as physical ones, it would justify the indolence and despondency, with which we are too apt to endure their pressure. Were the loss of Public Liberty, the decline and servitude of Nations as much beyond the reach of human exertion to prevent as the great causes of natural calamities, it would not be surprising, that men should derive their greatest consolation from insensibility, and tamely submit to what it was not granted them to avoid. But, happily for the species, most of the moral circumstances, upon which its happiness depends, are placed so much within its power, that it may in general be said to be the only author of its good or evil fortune. Do we see a particular Community advancing to power and glory, do we see it shadowing the ocean with its fleets, extending its commerce, and giving law to the surrounding nations, we shall not be deceived in concluding, that it retains an internal principle of vigour, which has hitherto preserved its

its government from gross corruption, and kept it true to the original ends of its institution.—Do we on the contrary see that success deserts its arms, that commerce languishes, that its military ardour evaporates in feeble and fruitless efforts, that the tide of opulence is at an ebb, that its consequence, as well as the opinion of its force, diminishes with its neighbours, we may safely pronounce that there is some internal defect, of which these calamities are only the indication. In such a country vain will be the attempt to restore its drooping fortune, by any means which fall short of a radical Reformation. In vain may fleets be fitted out, in vain may armies be raised, in vain may generals be recalled, or ministers displaced; these changes may accelerate, or retard, but can never prevent approaching ruin.—While the spirit and manners of the Roman common-wealth remained entire, neither the invasion of Pyrrhus, the victories of Hannibal, nor the bloody irruptions of the Gauls, were capable of shaking it on its firm foundations; but when that haughty People had submitted to the common yoke, it beheld its ancient glory accompany the decline of ancient manners.

A foolish or effeminate Prince, surrounded by a venal Senate, to whom the very name of virtue is either unknown or odious, was not born to retain dominions acquired by republican wisdom, and republican valour: nor could

a People, which had lost all pretensions to govern itself, long expect to rule over others.— Every attack of its rude and less corrupted neighbours severed some part of the Empire from the rest, till at length the mighty fabric, which it had been the labour of ages to rear, fell in an instant, and left behind no traces of its former greatness.

In modern times this series of events which we still admire in history, has been renewed, and we now behold it hastening on to a similar catastrophe. A small and obscure People, confounded with the crowd of barbarians, which submitted to the Roman yoke, and scarcely honoured with a name, preserved through all the successive calamities it was destined to experience, the seeds of future greatness. The flocks of contending factions, the gloomy zeal of fanaticism, the attempts which were made upon its liberties, and even the civil wars which those attempts repeatedly produced, instead of depressing, have only conspired to exalt it.— These contentions, which seemed to menace destruction, kept alive, by the mutual jealousies they inspired, a spirit of rational inquiry, and a knowledge of those great rights which are essential to human happiness. All the passions too, of which the mind is susceptible, being continually called forth, and applied to the noblest objects, imparted to the national character that vigour and energy, which rendered it equal to the

the greatest enterprizes, and insured success. It is an inquiry of the most interesting nature, why England is the only Country, which has preserved in any degree of purity, that common Constitution, which all the nations of Europe derived from their Ancestors: in this place it is sufficient to remark, that its power and greatness have always been proportionable to the degree, in which the People have asserted their privileges. Those who are continually declaiming against intestine divisions, and think an age of servitude a cheap redemption from a single popular commotion, will do well to consider the blaze of glory which gilded those disastrous contests which can never be remembered without a tear, the awe and terror which this People impressed upon the most powerful Sovereigns of Europe, even during the usurpation of Cromwell, and the instant disgrace and shame which attended the restoration of its hereditary tyrants.

Nor is it difficult to assign a reason for these events—The Parliament which took up arms against Charles I. and carried their successes to so astonishing a length, knew that they were violating the established forms of the Constitution, and therefore made a bold appeal to the common rights and common reason of the People. Nor could they hope for success, without encouraging principles the most favourable to human liberty, as well as avoiding those corruptions, which had been the ground of their
opposition:

opposition : for men, who are doomed to inevitable slavery, will always prefer an hereditary and prescriptive tyranny to one of a later date. They had, besides, embarked in a desperate struggle, not one of the common causes, in which the lives and property of a nation are twisted to advance the personal greatness, or gratify the private resentment of a Sovereign, but such an one as roused the passions, awakened the energy, and occupied the soul of every individual. It was necessary to conquer or to perish ; and this was understood by all.—No private jealousies therefore, nor personal cabals, no hereditary prejudice of birth, none of the common arts and machinations, which place an awful distance between the favour of a Sovereign, and the virtues of his Subjects, were sufficiently powerful to depress ability and courage ; every one gladly conspired to reward those talents upon which his own security depended, and each individual seized upon the station which he felt himself born to occupy—This is the ordinary effect of civil commotions : which, while they confound all human distinctions, frequently cure inveterate abuses, restore the youth and vigour of a community, and remove the obstacles of unfriended merit : thus the whirlwind, which spreads ruin and desolation along the earth, is sometimes known to purify the air, and dispel the collected seeds of pestilence. Nor, when the supreme power was
invaded

invaded by Cromwell, was the nation therefore enslaved, or the principles of freedom subverted. That man who united the virtues of a patriot with the ambition of a tyrant, knew, that a People which had lately dared so much and so successfully in defence of their Liberty, required the guidance of a firm but cautious hand; and that it was easier to dazzle their haughty temper with the glory, than to bend it by the terrors of usurpation. He therefore applied himself so successfully to cultivate the genius of his nation, to restrain its turbulent spirit without extinguishing its vigour, to increase its commerce, improve its resources, and above all to preserve that force of discipline and simplicity of manners, without which all human power is but of short duration, that we shall not regret the eminence he attained, if we can forget the steps by which he ascended. If we compare him with the sovereigns who preceded, he alone will appear by nature intended for a throne; if with his successors, we shall perhaps apply to him, though in a different sense, that device which was invented for the perfidious Charles, "*exiit tyrannus, regnavit ultimus.*"

The Restoration, as we are accustomed to call it, that ensued, was accompanied with the most sinister omens. That Liberty, whose maintenance has cost such streams of generous blood, and which might have been fixed upon a solid basis for succeeding ages, was made the shameful purchase

purchase of private emolument ; and surrounding nations, that had turned their attention to a theatre, which presented the most awful and interesting scenes, beheld with astonishment those rights, which it had been fatal to the father to invade, resigned without a struggle to his degenerate son. A profligate and luxurious prince, infected with the vices of every country which had yielded an asylum to his wandering steps, destitute alike of private and public virtue, without faith, or gratitude, or shame, without the ambition of a tyrant, or the feelings of a man, seized without opposition the throne of the haughtiest People in the universe, and used it as an hereditary patrimony. He had been admitted without compact or stipulation, and he soon afforded a striking lesson of what that People must expect, who hold their privileges at the mercy of a King, instead of defending them by their own exertion. From the first moment of his return, he gave most unequivocal proofs, that he considered the Public Revenue as destined to gratify his private vices, the forces of the kingdom as the necessary engines of despotism, the enemies of his country as his natural friends, and every honest man as his inveterate foe. His life was one continued scene of riot and effeminacy, sometimes varied with the graver schemes of deliberate tyranny ; so that it is doubtful whether his private character was more fatal to the morals, or his public one to the

the

the liberties of his Country. The ancient and faithful friends of the fortunes of his family were dismissed with ignominy, for wishing to reconcile the prerogatives of the king with the safety of the nation, and the existence of a Constitution ; while the chosen band of royal satellites was composed of men distinguished only by their crimes ; the most corrupt where all were venal, the most abandoned where all were profligate ; whom nothing could rescue from universal scorn, but becoming the objects of universal hatred.—It is no wonder that such a reign should have been the era of disgrace and calamity ; that public credit should have drooped, and national honour declined ; that war should have degenerated into piracy and rapine, peace into civil and religious persecution ; that the natural friends and allies of England should have been exasperated by undeserved and unprovoked hostility : to sum up all, that a dark and baneful conspiracy should have been formed against the Constitution of this Country, and the liberties of mankind.

These are the evils and disgraces to which a nation must submit, that relaxes in the care of its acknowledged rights. For it is the grossest prejudice to imagine, that there is something in the soil or climate of this country, more peculiarly adapted to the preservation of Freedom. Heaven has not distributed its blessings with so partial and so sparing an hand. The noble plant
will

will thrive in every portion of the globe, where its leaves are watered, and its roots protected; and in every climate will it droop and wither, when it is deserted by its natural defenders. If we cast our eyes upon the neighbouring nations, which are now overwhelmed with common despotism, we shall not find one which did not originally boast a Constitution similar to our own. Spain has had her Cortez, France her three Estates, Germany her independent Electors, Sweden and Denmark their Senates. If these are now forgotten, lost and swallowed up in one promiscuous ruin, it surely becomes us to take example by their fate, and to steer the Public vessel far from a shore which is already covered with wrecks.

How near we were to this catastrophe, the situation of our Government at the Revolution may instruct us. A dark, vindictive tyrant, in spite of the opposition of the best and most enlightened part of the nation, was elevated to the Throne, which he had scarcely occupied an instant, before he displayed a deliberate design of destroying the few remaining Liberties of his Country.—His brother had at least possessed specious vices; but James, to all the hereditary defects of his family, added qualities which were peculiar to himself: insolence, which not contented with invading the privileges, made him irritate the passions of his People; bigotry, so blind, so fierce, so unrestrained by reason or experience,

perience, that he armed the natural supporters of Arbitrary Power in defence of Freedom; and cruelty, so devoid of mercy or forgiveness, that he left no room for affection to his person, or pity to his misfortunes. Yet even under all these disadvantages, it is probable he would have prevailed, had he had no other obstacles to encounter than the opposition of his Subjects; so much had public spirit declined, so little was left of the ancient English character, such a love of indolence and pleasure, such a general supineness prevailed.—What would have ensued from such success it is not difficult to conjecture. As soon as the horrors of religious persecution had ceased, and a superstition which adds new fury to all the malignant passions of tyrants themselves, had been once more firmly established by the destruction of every thing generous in the character of the nation, or just and equal in the principles of the Constitution, that universal calm which is the surest symptom of political death would have succeeded. Under such a Prince virtue and ability would have been alike suspected and odious; while the only merit was a blind implicit deference to his most extravagant commands; to speak or think with freedom had been treason; to have hesitated at any baseness, rebellion, and to have asserted the Rights of the People, destruction. We may easily conceive what would have been the price of preferment, either in the Church or State:
and

and that the laws themselves, wrested into an universal engine of private oppression, would have resigned the lives and property of every individual to the disposal of the Monarch; while the oracles of Religion were dumb to every other purpose than that of inculcating the most vile and abject submission. A just and equal Government, which consults the happiness of mankind, is always the patron of morals, and the encourager of virtue; since neither extent of territory, nor superiority of wealth, nor the number of mercenary troops can bestow security, but the spirit, valour, and principles of its subjects armed for their own defence, and united in a common cause. Tyranny on the contrary, which always reverses the order of Nature, and aims at private emolument through public ruin, finds it necessary to discourage qualities which might be formidable to itself, to weaken in order to govern, and to disarm every hand which is capable of using a sword to an honest or a generous purpose. We may easily conceive that such a Government, in its progress, would consider even Industry and Commerce, although the immediate principles of national vigour, as forming impediments to the views of a Prince or his Minister; and, with the dark and malevolent policy of Philip II. of Spain, think it necessary to introduce universal indigence and misery in order to insure obedience. In every instance, therefore, the general good would have been

H h 2 scandalously

scandalously given up, or counteracted; the national honour basely sacrificed on every Public occasion: while the most calamitous and unnatural wars were lightly entered into, or pertinaciously pursued, did they flatter the private ambition of a Prince, secure the power of a Minister, or increase the perquisites of a Sycophant. Projects like these afford ample scope to carry on the generous designs of Arbitrary Government; to break the spirit of a nation by private and public calamities; invade its property by the most immoderate impositions; extinguish its few remaining privileges; abolish all distinctions but that of Slave and Tyrant; and bow it by every circumstance of infamy and degradation to the yoke. If we have seen the reverse of this picture take place during a long series of years which succeeded the Revolution, we must attribute it less to a change of Governors, than to the courage and vigilance which the People derived from their own successful struggles, and to the renovation of the Constitution.

Whatever magic there may be in particular names, whatever real distinctions in the character of individuals, experience sufficiently evinces, that the effects of power are as similar and universal as the passions and nature of Man; and that neither private obligations nor public confidence, neither shame nor gratitude, nor the sacred doctrines and influence of Religion itself upon its immediate Professors, have ever been
sufficient

sufficient to repress the inordinate effects of ambition. Were it necessary to illustrate this by example, we might shew by what steps the petty Sovereigns of all the European nations have gradually emancipated themselves from their former state of limited dominion. We could, in almost every instance, ascertain the particular æra when, either by force or fraud, they have wrested from their subjects, or from their brother tyrants the nobility, each of the privileges which are now become the favourite claim of Royalty. We could shew through what unparalleled crimes, by what successive scenes of perfidy and cruelty, with what an utter disregard of all the sanctions of Morality and Religion, as well as the continual sacrifice of Public Good, they have arrived at the distinguished honours they now enjoy; we could even frequently fix, with accuracy, the time, when a particular family has become divine, by throwing off every thing human in its character or conduct.

This was well understood by the subtle and comprehensive genius of Machiavel, when he asserted, that no Government can be lasting which is not frequently reduced to its first principles. He knew, that laws and forms were weak barriers against the encroaching spirit of those who are intrusted with their execution; that mercenary troops can never be wanting to defend, nor Casuists to vindicate, nor Priests to sanctify the excesses of ambition. He lived in a Country, which had

seen the Consular Fasces borne before the destroyers of the Republic; and where the most dreadful despotism that ever trampled upon the Rights of Nature had been erected, under the shadow of a Religion which breathes peace, good-will, and equality to mankind. He therefore taught, that the vigilance and vengeance of the People must be placed like a flaming sword to guard their Rights; and gave the most salutary and effectual admonitions against unlimited Power, by exhibiting the crimes through which it is pursued, the horrors by which it is maintained.

That the Government of England underwent this process, at least to a certain degree, must be evident to all who have studied the history of those times. Though the agents in this great business, startled at the importance of their own attempt, and wanting honesty and boldness to avow the principles upon which they acted, have left the justice they owed their Country's wrongs unfinished, though latest posterity may execrate that timid or interested policy which meanly betrayed the Cause of Freedom, at the very instant when her triumph was complete; yet, under whatever pretext a King is driven from the Throne, there can be little dispute concerning the principles upon which that expulsion must be justified. Foreign nations were indeed surprized to see the Rights of Humanity springing up and blossoming under the shadow of a Throne; and that those who were for annihilating the liberties

berties of millions, to gratify the pride of a few indolent usurpers, should be driven from the precincts of a Court: they did not consider that the love of Power, which continually impels the great to violate every duty, may even produce contrary effects; and make them, when it is their interests, encourage Virtue, and patronize Truth.

To these principles of our Constitution, restored to part at least of their original purity, have been owing the internal stability and safety, the external glory and power of England.—In vain were the tyrants of the world leagued against that Government, which rested upon the broad basis of general consent and public freedom. Vain alike were the attacks of violence, and the machinations of fraud. While civil and religious persecutors were depopulating all the continent, here might a real lover of humanity have contemplated an asylum open to the unfortunate; religion, which addressed itself to the reason, not to the fears of men; laws which defended property, without oppressing the poor; a Government which preserved its own authority, without annihilating the privileges of its subjects, and subjects who had learned to obey, without abandoning their claim to resist. If warlike feats deserved a place in the page which is dedicated to human happiness, we could produce achievements which equal the lustre of Rome in its brightest blaze of glory. We could

flew the ocean covered by our fleets, our arms triumphant upon every shore, and our empire not only acknowledged, but blessed by the remotest inhabitants of the globe. Such, and so irresistible are the efforts of a People, whose Government is founded upon Freedom, whose arms are directed by Justice. But what renders the retrospect more awful and interesting, is to behold commerce, agriculture, and population, increasing even amidst the tumults of War; and numerous bands of generous adventurers, issuing from the prolific bosom of the parent state, to transport their manners, rights, religion, to the extremities of the earth, and carrying with them the protection of heaven, and the seeds of future greatness. Were we not acquainted with the continual vicissitude of human affairs, was history itself any thing but a register of public calamities, of nations enslaved, and empires sunk for ever, we surely might have considered so stupendous an edifice as perfect and secure; and while we admired the beauty of the work, pronounced the eternity of the pile. Possessed of freedom so often vindicated, of rights so accurately ascertained, of a Government not founded upon the ravages of conquest, or the immemorial degradation of mankind, but deduced from plain and positive compact; deriving greatness not from the oppression of its neighbours, but from the blessings of nature, and the exertions of industry, this Country might surely seem preserved

preserved from all the common causes of decay. Above all, whoever had turned his eyes towards the vast Atlantic, and beheld the majestic form of the English Constitution, with all its admirable proportions and noble simplicity, imitated and improved by a multitude of rising states, which gloried in their common origin, and limited dependence upon this Country, would have thought that Providence itself had directed the wondrous plan of human happiness ; and while he saw nothing within the reach of either wisdom or fortune to add, would have only breathed a pious prayer for its perpetuity.

Let us now consider a different scene, which presents a mournful instance of the instability of human affairs, and the rapid decline of greatness. Let us again turn our eyes to the same People, and behold them labouring under the complicated calamities of hostile attacks and domestic corruptions ; toiling through all the horrors of an unsuccessful civil war, wasting their small remaining forces on visionary schemes of mad ambition, baffled and despised by their enemies, deserted by their friends, abandoned by Heaven, and delivered up to almost inevitable destruction. The shades are indeed dark and dreadful ; but the resemblance is too strong to be mistaken : and it is no longer time to be cheated with the deceitful colourings of hope and adulation.— Whatever ills our present situation offers to our
view,

view, whatever distresses the sad perspective of future years may threaten, it is necessary to behold them with a steady eye. For thus alone can we make a proper use of the resources which yet remain, in order to procrastinate our Country's fate; or, if fortitude and prudence are insufficient to avert the impending ruin, it is better to perish like men that have exerted themselves to the last, than to be swept away like helpless animals, entangled in the toil, and slaughtered without resistance.

And here we shall not scruple to apply the principles which we established at the beginning, and to assert, that such a descent from the pinnacle of greatness, to the lowest abyss of shame, could never have ensued, without a correspondent change in the principles and Administration of the English Government. It has been long remarked, that there is a tide in human things, which is never so near an ebb, as when it is lifted beyond its bounds, and seems to swell the highest. This circumstance, which is attributed by the ignorant to some mysterious power and denominated fortune, is easily resolved by keener and more penetrating understandings, into the necessary agency of moral causes. If the very hairs of our head are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without the permission of Providence, still less can we suppose that mighty empires, which involve the destiny of millions,
are

are detached from the general chain of causes, and left to fluctuate at random.

But as an attentive observer might have predicted the future fate of Rome, at the very instant when she exulted over the fall of her aspiring rival; thus would an English patriot have trembled for his Country's safety, when she had reached that point of glory which admitted no farther augmentation: and while he beheld her inveterate enemies humbled at her feet, her empire extended to the opposite limits of the earth, her fleets returning with every wind, and loaded with the luxuries of every climate, he would have feared the sure contagion which has ever accompanied excessive prosperity. That contagion has long been circulating in secret through this devoted land, tainting the sources of national happiness, and corroding the vitals of the Constitution. Among the People it has produced an headlong rage for trifling and dangerous pleasures, a contempt for the virtuous simplicity of ancient manners, and an oblivion of their most important rights; among the great, a luxury which knows no bounds, an indifference to the public good, and a disposition to sacrifice the dignity of birth, the duties of rank, and the hope of future fame, to the low enjoyments of the present moment.

Could such dispositions have long subsisted in a nation with safety to their liberties, it would have been the first exception of the kind within

the annals of humanity. It would have implied a degree of wisdom, virtue, and moderation in their rulers, which no established Government has yet been able to boast. We have therefore no reason to be surprized, that every possible advantage has been taken of the general supineness, and that a malignant influence has increased in silence, till it is almost too mighty for opposition ; and by undermining every support of the Constitution, threatens the entire destruction of the pile.

The stability of that Constitution has, through many succeeding ages, depended upon the Public virtue and integrity of our Parliaments.—The necessity of a mutual co-operation between the King and the Representatives of the People gave the nation every security for their Rights, which they could then think necessary. Whatever grievances had been introduced during the intermission of Parliaments were sure to be forcibly represented, and their redress demanded, before the exigencies of the Sovereign were supplied. Men that considered themselves as the immediate Agents of their Fellow Citizens, selected for the particular purpose of transacting Public business in their names, shortly to be mingled with the common mass, and to share in all the consequences of their own conduct, could not easily be induced to impose burthens which would oppress themselves, or to surrender rights which were essential to their own safety.

Nor

Nor were those modern refinements yet invented, those generous indemnifications which a grateful Minister bestows upon the Deputies of the People, to reward them for their patriotism and loyalty. Nor was it yet understood that a small number of individuals, frequently destitute alike of fortune, virtue, and abilities, introduced against the consent of the People, voting in opposition to their opinions, and lavishing their property without their consent, had a right to disfranchise their Electors, and bereave them of those very Powers to which they owed their own existence. Such contradictions and absurdities are the offspring of modern times, as well as that political leger-de-main which can concentrate the essence of a populous County, or a commercial City, in a ruined sheep-fold; and which, while it gives the laborious occupier an equal share in the Legislature with an hundred thousand respectable Citizens, can, if necessary, annihilate the political existence of millions, make an House of Commons spring up from its own ashes, and vest the virtual Representation of an immense Continent in the Corporation of a Cornish Borough. It cannot be imagined that such doctrines can have been propagated, without giving the justest alarm to the real Friends of their Country. They have therefore repeatedly endeavoured to stem the torrent of corruption, to expel the minions of a Court from

from the temple of Public Freedom, to restore our Parliaments to their original purity, and the People to their hereditary Rights; and had they succeeded in their attempts, there is every reason to believe, that we should have escaped the weight of misfortune, which is now from every quarter bursting upon our heads; nor have added to the many past examples of ambitious phrenzy, the spectacle we now afford of sinking Greatness, and a shattered Empire.

But it is the common failing of human beings to be more disposed to lament the pressure of misfortunes, than to take precautions against their approach, or even to exert themselves for a cure. States, like individuals, frequently become wearied with the practice of those virtues which have produced their exaltation; and in a sudden access of delirium throw away the advantages which it had cost them ages to acquire. In vain do the few unprejudiced patriots, who with more penetrating eyes look into futurity, endeavour to awaken them from their delusion, and point out the chains which are scarcely perceivable under wreaths of flowers: their sagacity is despised, their predictions slighted, their superior virtues hated, till the hour of vengeance is arrived, which dispels the short-lived dream of pleasure and security, and rouses the miserable victims to real slavery and substantial ruin.

This has been long the case with our own nation, and we are now paying the severe penalties
of

of former folly. What repeated warnings have we received of the increasing venality of our Representatives; and how often have we neglected the opportunity of placing the Public Liberty upon a permanent basis! But so long as there could be a doubt concerning the extent of the contagion, so long as they condescended to spread the slightest veil over their infidelity, we acquiesced in the deceit, and chose to expect that relief from time, which is only attainable by virtue: as if universal experience had not shewn, that the first infringement of National Rights, which is permitted with impunity, is the introduction of every evil; that the attempts of ambition never finish but with the patience of mankind; and that there is no medium between opposing the least encroachment, and submitting to the greatest. But with our deluded Countrymen every pretext, however futile and ridiculous, has been alternately sufficient to quiet their fears, and lull their jealousies. Sometimes their liberties have been invaded to defend them the better against the attacks of tyranny, sometimes because a patriot King enjoyed the Throne; sometimes they were persuaded to forego redress, because the Minister was embarrassed with war; sometimes because he dared not interrupt the Public Peace; sometimes for fear of excluding the People's real Friends from Power; sometimes because the People's real Friends had obtained the Power
they

they fought, and must not hazard its loss. — Wretched nation, that has been induced to make the disease inveterate in expectation of a cure, and that did not understand, that it was a matter of no consequence in what name, or by what party they were enslaved !

But there is a certain degree of provocation, which it is unsafe to offer even to slaves. We had seen with tranquillity our treasures wasted, and our blood poured out in quarrels which did not interest the nation ; a multiplicity of laws, contrary to the principles of a free Government, enacted ; the national property lavished upon the nation's inveterate foes, and perpetual impositions established, as odious in their nature as oppressive in their operation. We have beheld the sacred influence of the laws sometimes perverted to oppress innocence, sometimes evaded to confer impunity upon the blackest crimes. Mercenary troops have been augmented in the hour of peace, and the guardians of the People's Liberties have sanctified that universal engine of oppression. The basest means of corruption have been openly adopted and avowed as a necessary scheme of Government ; and lest the People at large should possess dangerous or intractable virtues, it has been judged necessary to debase the native honesty of the English character, by authorising every thing which can most effectually subvert it. These, and a thousand other instances of Public Corruption, have
long

long been familiar to our view, without engaging us to vigilance or effectual opposition; so deep has been our lethargy, so implicit our confidence in our own security. But neither the degrading patience we have exerted, nor the licence of oppressing with impunity, nor the spoils which have rewarded our betrayers, were sufficient to content their unbounded appetite for mischief. It has been judged necessary to persecute and extirpate Human Liberty wherever it was found. One nation was too small a Theatre for rapine, and therefore it was decided to scatter death and havock over the whole Western Continent, and to disperse enmity, division, rage, and mutual desolation through all the parts of the noblest Empire in the Universe. Such a project as this was indeed worth ambition!—To rivet the chains of unborn millions, to blast, like a rapid pestilence, the blessings which Heaven had bestowed on half the Globe; to shew that neither ocean, desert, nor wilderness, is sufficiently wide or dreary to protect a single remnant of the species from the yoke!—or should they dare resist, to exercise unlimited fury against the devoted rebels; to interdict them from the common rights and mercies of War itself; let loose the ungovernable ferocity of savage rage upon their defenceless wives and children; destroy their generous and valiant youth in fields of battle; and then, by the gentler operations of

Civil Justice, gibbets, exile, and imprisonment, extirpate the few the sword had spared.

Such may, perhaps, be the language of some future philosophic Historian, who, removed from all the passions, interests, and prejudices which dazzle the actors in these important scenes, shall relate the awful events of the present period.—Such a man, perhaps, without considering the topics which are so forcibly impressed upon an English mind, the eternal and illimitable obedience which every Colony owes to the Parent State, the omnipotence of a British Parliament, or the generous design of desolating an immense Continent to make it free and happy, may regard nothing but the interests of humanity.—With such a view of things he may, perhaps, execrate the Authors of the American War as equally devoid of policy, public spirit, and humanity; and while he beholds on one side the rights of Nature, the interests of Mankind, a rising Empire formed upon the noblest principles of equity and reason, and destined to prove a common refuge from European Tyranny, he may see nothing on the other, but the low, illiberal aims of selfishness, avarice, and cruelty, that would, if possible, counteract the designs of Providence itself, engross its blessings, or convert them into curses for all the rest of the species. Should such a writer hereafter exist, it is probable he may add, after having brought the history of the American contest down to the present era;
such

such were the aims of the British Ministry, but the weakness of their measures was equal to the iniquity of their councils. That noble Country, which had so long been the bulwark of European Liberty, was doomed at length to submit to the common yoke, a just reward for having deviated from its former principles, and become the instrument of oppression. Instead of the triumphs it had expected, instead of seeing the spoils of the persecuted Colonies poured into its territories, instead of seeing the commerce of all the subject West enrich its Merchants, baits which the vile incendiaries of the war had made use of with too much success, it was doomed to experience every ill it had endeavoured to inflict: its wealth was destined to circulate through the very Country it had devoted to destruction; its commerce was gradually diminished by the depredations of its enemies, and by the intolerable impositions which were levied upon the People. Universal poverty and despair seemed to pervade the land; all ranks and orders of Men begun to share in the general distress; the poor, the rich, the obscure, the great, the idle, the industrious, were all alike included in the unequalled miseries which had invaded the land, excepting the few who received the spoils of their sinking Country, infected with its curses, and polluted with its blood. They now begun to perceive, with an anguish which it is difficult to express, that they had been deluded by the

I i 2

grossest

grossest artifices, to throw away the noblest prize that was ever possessed by mortals :—America was irreparably lost ; yet was there no term proposed to their distresses, no hope of peace, no attention to spare the last resources of an exhausted nation.

In this extremity of public and private distress some remains of the ancient English spirit seemed to burst forth from the embers under which it had been so long concealed. All the real and disinterested Friends of Public Freedom, all who had viewed with silent sorrow and indignation the progress of venality and the diminution of the People's influence, thought it necessary to unite in one last effort ; and to prevent, if possible, their Country's ruin, which seemed the inevitable consequence of such measures as were then pursued.—Roused from a lethargy of so long and so fatal a duration, they viewed with astonishment and horror the complicated calamities which surrounded them, and rightly deemed, that all was lost, unless some check could be interposed to the prevailing corruptions of their Government, and the People restored to their fundamental Rights. The splendor of their meridian glory was indeed past, the dream of greatness dissipated, and the pageantry of Empire lost ; but peace, security, and freedom were yet attainable blessings, denied to violence and ambition, but bestowed on virtue.

Such

Such may perhaps be the account hereafter given of the Petitions lately offered by the English People: may it be added, that they were attended with the amplest success, and diffused returning vigour through every part of the Constitution? That private interest and ambition, which had so long been suffered to triumph amidst their Country's ruin, were thenceforth restrained within their proper and salutary bounds: that the enormous burthens under which the nation had so long groaned; which had been accumulated under such a variety of pretexts; which had equally served to impoverish the People and corrupt their Representatives, were at length submitted to the wholesome regulations of a new Tribunal, superior to every impression of fear and interest, and solely intent upon the great and necessary object of Public Oeconomy. Above all, may it be said, that this great and constitutional Reformation, by restoring the English People to all their Rights, restored them to all their Virtues? That waking from their disgraceful lethargy, they viewed the carnage and desolation which had been perpetrated in their name with horror and remorse; and that with the ancient hereditary generosity of their character, they began to admire the very virtues they had so lately persecuted, and instead of invading the rights of others, turned their whole attention to the maintenance of their own.

Animated with these considerations, this Society, which feels for their Country's wrongs with all the sensibility which becomes the name of Englishmen, have undertaken the task of rousing their Countrymen to the defence of their hereditary Rights. Convinced that all remaining hopes of safety are centered in the great Body of the People, which, though sometimes deceived concerning the means, can voluntarily pursue no other end than the general happiness. They wish to awaken them from their lethargy—they wish to awaken them while the means of safety are yet left, before the English Constitution shall have become a name which it is dangerous to pronounce, a shade which it is fatal to evoke. While it is yet permitted to appeal to the feelings and understanding of the nation, while there are no laws which fetter the activity of the mind, while neither perpetual imprisonment, nor death, nor torments, are denounced against the hardy Citizen that shall remind his Countrymen of their expiring privileges, they dare to perform that mournful but necessary duty. They therefore set before them their undoubted Rights, so often vindicated, so often confirmed; Rights established by immemorial usage, confirmed by the purest decisions of their Legislators, and illustrated by the labours of Men, whose understandings have been the ornament of humanity, as much as their private virtues were the honour of their Country.

try. Convinced, that those who wish to enslave mankind will always attempt to divert their attention from the danger which threatens their liberty, till the mortal wound has been received, they present an antidote to the poisons which have been so industriously diffused. They believe, that whatever disputes may happen concerning the origin of Government, there can be none concerning its end and object. They are neither awed by the clouds of mysterious darkness which time has thrown around the basis of human establishments, nor by the fictitious rays with which superstition encircles particular brows ; and they acknowledge no divinity in any form of Government, farther than as it is a method of producing the Common Good, sanctified by the consent, and founded upon the necessities of the People. He that can believe otherwise, and while he admits that the Deity has given equal powers to all the species, passions to stimulate them to the pursuit of good, and reason to direct their choice, asserts that they are subjected, without resource, to the caprice of a few mortals, weak, contemptible, and bounded as themselves, may be called the Friend of Sovereigns, but must be reputed the enemy of human kind : he may as well imagine, that the lion is not to be resisted because he has fangs to tear ; or the serpent, because he has poison to infect ; but he will not persuade the African, that the arrow with which he pierces the monster's

ster's breast, or the javelin with which he nails the bloated reptile to the ground, does not equally enter into the design of Providence:—nor are such principles less dangerous to the safety of the Ruler, than fatal to the Rights of his Subjects; for while they establish the throne of despotism upon the necks of half the species, they are equally favourable to the first usurper that can vault into the seat, and lash the affrighted steeds over the body of their former master.

If we mention these great principles of all human society, it is not because we appeal to them against the Constitution of our Country, but because this Constitution is more immediately derived from them than is generally known. Amongst the many false and injurious calumnies which have been thrown upon those who distinguish between the interest of their Country and that of an iniquitous faction, none is more common nor more unjust, than that of attempting innovation. We cannot, therefore, better conclude our address upon this important subject, than by declaring, in the most explicit manner, that nothing is more foreign to the opinions and designs of the Society. But we have the less reason to be surprised at imputations like these, because they have always been the weapons made use of by the abettors of falsehood against the Friends of Truth. With them it has always been the most unpardonable sedition

tion to question the omnipotence of the prevailing power ; and while the oppressors of mankind are allowed to avail themselves of every engine to overthrow the established privileges of their Country, it is rebellion in the People to vindicate their invaded Rights, or even to murmur at the encroachment. But it is not to such men that we appeal.

Let the ingenuous and uncorrupted part of our Countrymen decide which are the real friends of the Constitution, and which the introducers of innovation ; those who would preserve it in its original vigour, or those who, with a seeming reverence for the forms, would annihilate the spirit ; those who wish to free it from the dirt and filth which impede its motion, or those who would destroy the machine itself, rather than restore it to its former purity ; those who contend for the clearest rights established in the most solemn manner, or those who, after having basely and surreptitiously invaded them, appeal to their own perfidy as a president. Lest what we have already said should not be sufficiently clear, we think it necessary to add, that we consider an hereditary sovereignty and nobility as essential parts of the Constitution which we claim, and admirably adapted to the genius of the English nation. But at the same time that we declare our approbation of a limited prerogative and a privileged nobility, we would hope that there is no Englishman that is not false
to

to the name, and a traitor to his Country, that would wish to increase either of these powers at the expence of the third and most essential, the Commonalty of England. By what means the People have been deprived of their essential, rights, by what imperceptible degrees the Representatives of a whole nation have been changed into the deputies of a few paltry and venal Boroughs; by what unconstitutional innovations these pretended Representatives have assumed a power of extending their own existence, though it may be doubted, whether the acts they passed for that purpose are more valid than those of the Long Parliament after the Abolition of the Kings and Lords, we have sufficiently explained in the tracts we have already printed and dispersed.—By what steps the immediate creatures of the People, invested with delegated powers to express the sense, and protect the rights of their Constituents, have been gradually converted into the inveterate enemies and destroyers of every thing they were chosen to defend, will be sufficiently evident to all who have remarked the proceedings of our late Parliaments. This only will we observe, that corruption has now so far exceeded its former limits, such widely-diffused calamities have been occasioned in its course, and such an open contempt has been expressed for the interests and approbation of the People, that the measure of our wrongs is full. As we can have no remaining hopes of redress from any thing
but

but our own exertion, we solemnly invite the free and uncorrupted part of the nation to unite for the assertion of their long-neglected rights, in the most dangerous crisis that ever threatened their destruction. And, as nothing seems better calculated to keep alive the sacred fire of Public Freedom, than to diffuse political and constitutional knowledge through the great Body of the People, as nothing can more forcibly impel a community to struggle for its Rights, than to give it just notions of their importance, and of the inevitable evils which must attend their loss, we presume to solicit the approbation and concurrence of all our generous Countrymen to the design in which we are engaged. Let them reflect, that the battle is lost while every individual consults his private ease and safety, and that those are separately trampled upon, who collectively would be felt in the balance, and incline the scale. If there is yet room for additional evils, or new disgraces; if a People can submit to more degrading insults than have been already heaped upon our heads, it may be the part of prudence to wait the event, or embrace a mean and precarious neutrality; but if we have already reached the utmost verge of Freedom and of Honour, if the least advance is slavery and perdition, it becomes us here to make a stand with the determined obstinacy of men, who know they have neither retreat nor hope beyond the spot which they now occupy and defend.

Paper IV.

*Paper IV.**The Third Address to the Public from the Society
for Constitutional Information.*

Audire est operæ pretium, procedere recte
Quirem Romanam, latiumque augescere vultis.

ENNIVS.

A PERIOD of five years is now nearly elapsed, since this Society first took upon itself the task of distributing Constitutional Information among the People of these Kingdoms.—It must be confessed, that the time, when we commenced our labours in the public service, was peculiarly favourable to our undertaking. The nation had then just begun to feel the complicated disgraces and miseries of a war, waged against all the dearest interests of justice and humanity. The splendid successes of our former contests with the House of Bourbon, fresh in the memory of the People, served only to embitter the series of inauspicious events, which attended our war with America. And, though at the commencement of those unfortunate disputes, the People, dazzled with the lustre of former victories, intoxicated with prosperity, and impatient of controul, scorned the dictates of reason or of justice, the humiliating

humiliating circumstances which had since taken place, had not a little contributed to dispose them to listen somewhat more willingly to the voice of admonition. Accumulated taxes, the certain consequences of a long and expensive war, had naturally put the nation upon considering, whether the war, in which they were then engaged, were just and necessary, or the result of misguided ambition.

Different, however, as were the opinions on this subject, and various as were the arguments by which they were respectively defended, yet the honest advocates on every side of the question, agreed in one point; that is to say, in the necessity of a speedy and substantial Reform in the expenditure of the public money—wisely considering, that that measure was equally necessary, either to carry on a burthensome war with effect, to restore our finances already almost irremediably disordered, or to diminish the exorbitant influence of the Crown.

The opposition, which an economical Reform experienced from a venal ministry, even after the People universally groaned under the intolerable burthens of the war, and after the influence of the Crown had been complained of by Parliament itself, excited a general spirit of discontent and inquiry. The most probable means of carrying this popular measure against the united efforts of interest and power, and of preserving the nation from again experiencing similar

similar calamities, were questions which engrossed the attention of the People at Large, and increased the thirst for political knowledge. The most obvious and most radical preservative, which then presented itself, was a REFORMATION OF PARLIAMENT. This opened a most extensive, though not a new field, as well of speculative as of practical discussion. In these useful political speculations, the industry of many public-spirited writers was employed with so much assiduity and success, and every species of Constitutional Information was caught by the public with such eagerness and avidity, that perhaps the grounds of just Government, and the principles of the English Constitution are now better understood by *the nation*, than at any former period.

The unremitting zeal, manifested by this Society on all those important questions, cannot be forgotten by the public. It cannot be forgotten, how loudly we lifted up our voice against the baneful American war ; how earnestly we urged a Reform, as well economical as Parliamentary. And we rejoice to find that our labours have not been in vain. We please ourselves in the reflection, that we have been in some degree instrumental in kindling that flame, which hath extended its influence to the remotest corners of our island. The sacred fire of liberty hath even burst the barriers of the ocean, and spread far and wide over our sister kingdom. Nor shall

shall its force abate, until our purified Constitution shall emerge from the flame, with all its ancient vigor and renovated lustre.

But, while we indulge these pleasing hopes, what is our concern to see the prospect clouded by repeated attacks upon the most valuable parts of our Constitution, THE TRIAL BY JURY, and THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS! we should be wanting to our fellow Citizens, we should be wanting to ourselves, and to the engagements, which, by associating, we entered into with the public, were we to suffer such events to pass without animadversion, without exposing their dangerous tendency, and pointing out their only remedy.

In Ireland we have beheld a daring infringement on both these inestimable privileges, by an act passed in the last Session of the Parliament of that kingdom, which has in certain cases drawn the cognizance of the crime of publishing a libel from the ancient constitutional tribunal of a jury, to the summary jurisdiction of justices appointed by the Crown. Let not our brethren in Ireland console themselves with the lenity of the punishment inflicted by that statute. Every invasion of the rights of mankind hath appeared at first in its least odious form, and time only hath discovered all its natural deformity. Let them be assured, that this apparent lenity is but a lure to reconcile them to the principle of the bill. Let them permit this Parliament to chastise
them

them with whips: future Parliaments will chastise them with scorpions. The same necessity, which is said to call for this dangerous innovation, will be made the pretext in future for arming it with new terrors, for increasing its penalties, and multiplying its punishments. *Obsta principiis*, as hath been well observed, is the only safe rule of practical policy.

But can we be surprized at this attempt in a remoter part of the empire, when, in the very Metropolis of this kingdom, in the case of the Dean of St. Asaph, the most alarming doctrines have been held forth to the public, by the majority of the Judges of our Court of King's Bench? We are well aware, that in no very modern times, Prerogative Judges have maintained, that the jury had no right to decide, whether the paper in question were or were not a libel. But we are certain that this doctrine is of no high antiquity: and, on the contrary, that the most ancient, and most authoritative writers on the English law, have maintained the right of the jury to find a general verdict. We mean not, however, here to enter upon the discussion of a point of positive municipal law; we shall only say, that, if the law be as the Court have in this instance declared it, there is an end of trial by jury in matters of libel: there is an end of the liberty of the press: the English Constitution is no more.

You

You may, perchance, be told by some courtly Lawyer, that the present Judges have said and done no more than their predecessors have said and done before them. It is fit, however, that you should be informed, that the doctrine now held forth is infinitely more extensive, and infinitely more dangerous than all that has been laid down by the most arbitrary ministers of justice in former times. Their adjudications extended only to matters of libel. Their decisions could affect only the property, the liberty, or the reputation of the subject. We are now for the first time told, that the crimes of forgery and writing an incendiary letter are exactly in the same predicament with that of publishing a libel. We now learn, that not only the property, the liberty, and the reputation, but even the life, of the subject are at the disposal of fixed Magistrates appointed by the Crown.

But, as if these measures and these doctrines were not sufficient to awaken the attention of the Public, it is still more strongly called upon by some recent transactions, in which, with complicated mischief, the trial by Jury is abolished, the right of Popular Assemblies is violated, and an Inquisitorial Power of extorting Evidence from a Prisoner is established. We mean the late unprecedented prosecutions by attachment in Ireland. That any man should be treated as a criminal for convening the People at their own request, to deliberate on the mode of attaining

VOL. II. K k a

a Redress of their Grievances, is not a little extraordinary. That this act, if done by a Sheriff, should be deemed a contempt of the Court of King's-Bench, is still more incomprehensible. But that a person suspected of a crime should be compelled by duress of imprisonment to become his own accuser, is indeed a subject of the most serious alarm. If such a mode of proceeding be tolerated in any part of the British dominions, there is an end of all the boasted pre-eminence of our system of criminal jurisprudence. In France, the preliminary torture no longer exists. In Spain and Portugal, we hear no more of the severity of the Inquisition. And in England and Ireland, where it is a settled principle of criminal law, that no man is bound to accuse himself, that a confession extorted by threats, or even by promises, is of no avail against a Prisoner, shall we suffer ourselves to be compelled to answer interrogatories upon oath, framed by an incensed Attorney-General, for the avowed illegal purpose of making us criminate ourselves? In our own history we read, that the rack was not unfrequently used against State Prisoners, during the tyrannical reigns of the Tudors, and the first of the Stewarts. But in vain will all the Judges of England have declared their abhorrence of so detestable a practice, in vain will they have exclaimed, that no such punishment was known or allowed by our law*, if, by submitting to the process of attachment,

* Russ. Coll. I. 638.

ment, we acquiesce in the principle of torture. For where is the mighty difference between extorting a confession by the rack or by imprisonment? Nay, is not the former best suited to the generous and courageous spirit of a Briton? Would he not prefer the short but dreadful trial, where he may shew the vigour of his mind unsubdued by all the violence of the rack, rather than languish out his days in the gloomy and servile horrors of a prison?

Nor suffer yourselves to be told, that the method of examining the delinquent upon oath in matters of contempt, is of "high antiquity, and by long and immemorial usage is become the law of the land†." A bad custom ought to be abolished. High antiquity and immemorial usage can never make it to be the law of the land*; but furnish an unanswerable argument for its speedy abrogation.

Nor let our Countrymen of Great-Britain imagine themselves uninterested in the concerns of the People of Ireland. The Liberties of our sister kingdom, the remaining hope of Britain, united to us by all the ties of long connection, vicinity, similarity of language, of manners, and of laws, can never be to us an object of small importance. Every precedent of law adduced

K k 2

in

† Black. Conf. IV. 288.

* Judge Yates, in the case of general warrants, declared, that "an usage, even from the foundation of Rome itself, would not make them good." 1 Black. Rep. 562.

in support of this extraordinary doctrine, may be cited in our own Courts with equal propriety and justice. English Judges may perhaps be found (perhaps they have already existed) to support the same doctrines and the same practice. Let our Countrymen reflect, that in this case the same law prevails in both kingdoms. Our Liberties are inseparably connected with those of our Brethren in Ireland. We must stand or fall together; or, at least, we shall not long survive them.

Such are the facts, which we submit to your consideration: and such are the motives, which compel us to declare, that *your Liberties are in danger*; that *your Constitution is shaken to the foundation*; and that, unless a speedy and substantial exertion take place on the part of the People, *it will fall to rise no more.*

To hope that Parliament, as it is now constituted, would even offer to remove, one by one, the causes of our complaints, would indeed be a vain and visionary expectation. Parliament itself is in too corrupt and miserable a state to attempt to reform grievances. And, were our Legislature to undertake, and even to accomplish, so laudable a purpose, we are sorry to say, it is by no means certain, that the result would be answerable to the hopes of the People. New grievances will still arise, as wounds will continually break out, where the cure is incomplete.

Let

Let us then intreat you by your Property, your Liberties, your Lives, by all that is dear to you as Men and as Citizens, for a while to suspend your attention to these lesser, though grievous, wounds to the Constitution. Let us, for the present, direct our united force against those intolerable badges of Slavery, the sources of all our calamities, the unconstitutional duration of Parliament, and a defective Representation of the People—a Representation so totally mangled and absurd, as to subject us to the pity or the ridicule of all Foreign Nations. No more let us boast of our Freedom at home, our Glories abroad. Our Glories are tarnished: our Liberties are fled; and, if we lose the golden moment, will never more return.

In the whole course of our endeavours to obtain a Reformation of Parliament, never did any opportunity present itself so favourable as at present. At what former period of our exertions were the People of England so strongly supported by the voice of their Brethren in Scotland and Ireland? When had we a Minister bound down by so many solemn engagements to promote a Parliamentary Reform, and at the same time so powerfully enabled to enforce it? Who can remember an opposition more strongly disposed to second our endeavours? Nothing remains to be wished for, but a vigorous support of our Friends in Parliament, by numer-

ous applications on the part of the People : and this we trust will not long be wanting.

When this grand National Grievance shall be done away, when the People shall again have acquired their just weight in the scale of Legislation, then, and not till then, shall we behold our Rights restored, our Liberties re-established, and all the detail of lesser abuses corrected and removed. Then only will our apprehensions of danger from the Power of the Nobles and the Prerogative of the Crown be wholly dispelled. Then only shall we feel, that the Rights and Privileges of the Commons' House of Parliament are *in fact* the Rights and Privileges of the People of Great-Britain. And, if our late heavy calamities have deprived us of the hopes of ever repossessing that dazzling splendour (seldom, alas ! productive of substantial good,) which once encircled the British name, we may at least insure DOMESTIC HAPPINESS AND LIBERTY to ourselves and our posterity,

January 14th, 1785.

Paper V.

Paper V.

A

SUMMARY EXPLANATION

OF THE PRINCIPLES OF

MR. PITT'S INTENDED BILL

FOR AMENDING THE

Representation of the People in Parliament.

By the Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL.

WITH

An ADVERTISEMENT prefixed,

FROM THE

SOCIETY for CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION.

ADVERTISEMENT

FROM THE

Society for Constitutional Information.

*I*N reprinting the following publication, the Society for Constitutional Information have two distinct objects in view.

The first and most important is that, which is the grand purpose of their Institution, the promoting of a substantial Reform in the present defective system of Parliamentary Representation.

The other is of a more private and personal nature: the vindication of the character of the Society, from an imputation originally thrown upon them by the enemies of all Reform, but since countenanced by many, whom (however they may have been mistaken in this particular, or however widely they may differ in opinion from the Society) they firmly believe to be sincere Friends to a Parliamentary Reform.

The general tendency of the Society's publications has been, rather to ascertain the extent of the Rights of Mankind, than to point out any specific mode of regaining them, or of counteracting the deplorable effects, which have attended their loss.

In such researches, they have uniformly adopted the broadest and most solid basis in preference to any temporising system, perhaps better accommodated to the humour of the Legislative Body, as at present constituted.

situted. In so doing they have endeavoured to place before the eyes of the People, a model of that perfection, which it may perhaps be difficult to attain, but which ought to be the ultimate aim of every wise nation.

It is, however, somewhat extraordinary, that the propagation of these doctrines should give rise to an idea, that the Society would never countenance any Plan of Reform, which did not fully quadrate with their own notions of perfection.

The Members of the Society are not so totally unacquainted with men and things, as to expect an immediate compliance with the full extent of their wishes : nor yet so blind to the national interest, as to reject any plan, from which a considerable portion of public good is likely to ensue.

For which reasons, the Society for Constitutional Information have published the following plan, as a measure, which, if fully carried into execution, would, in their opinion, be A SUBSTANTIAL MELIORATION OF THE COMMONS' HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT.

June 3d, 1785.

SUMMARY EXPLANATION.

FROM Mr. Pitt's introductory speech, on the 18th of April last, it appears, that his Plan for Reforming the Representation of the People consists of two parts.

I. In the first of these a systematical addition of Members to the Counties and the Metropolis is proposed to be made, not by increasing the present number of the House of Commons, but by transferring the Right of Election to the larger districts from such decayed or inconsiderable Boroughs, not containing four hundred houses, as may be induced, on the offer of a satisfactory compensation, voluntarily to make that surrender.

The execution of this proposal, if it should be adopted in the next Session, would take place immediately after the expiration of the present Parliament. For the whole system of additional Representatives to the larger districts would be ascertained finally, in that Session; and before the next General Election a number of small Boroughs would probably agree to surrender their franchises, to an amount sufficient to furnish

nish the intended augmentation of Members to the Metropolis, and the Counties, in a certain order, and in their due proportion according to their present population; at least, if the disfranchisement of a sufficient number of such Boroughs should be thought not likely to take place during the existence of this Parliament, as it is here supposed, yet, when the means for effecting this voluntary surrender shall be considered, it will be found highly probable, that the disfranchisement during this Parliament would be great, and before the period of a second General Election would arrive, it could hardly fail to be complete. And surely this despatch in an operation of such immense magnitude, to which the consent and co-operation of so many individuals would be indispensably requisite, may well deserve to be considered a sufficiently speedy execution of this part of his plan.

The number of additional Representatives to the great districts is proposed to be seventy-two; for which the disfranchisement of thirty-six small Boroughs would be wanted. The means by which so considerable a surrender of the Right to return Members to Parliament is expected to be obtained is certainly adequate to the end proposed, and yet in the view, either of equity or of expedience, perfectly unexceptionable.

It

It is proposed that a million of pounds sterling be set apart, as a fund for compensation to the Boroughs which may be disfranchised; that this whole sum be divided into thirty-six shares, of which, that each Borough agreeing to surrender its Elective Right, and applying by Petition from two thirds of its Electors to Parliament for that purpose, be entitled to one share, to be distributed in due proportion among the several persons interested therein, according to their respective equitable claims, by a special Committee of the House of Commons, to be appointed in the same manner as Committees are appointed to try the merits of contested Elections; by which, if any question should arise, touching the Right of Voting, or whether the Petitioners are actually two thirds of the Voters, such question shall be decided: that the interest of these thirty-six shares, or several principal sums of money, be accumulated and added to each principal sum, until by the decision of such Committee, each sum, principal and interest included, shall be awarded to some small Borough, on its voluntary application to be disfranchised. By this provision, the sum appropriated, if not large enough at first to reduce the decayed Boroughs to surrender their obnoxious Rights, would continually increase, and the temptation to resign them would become ultimately irresistible.

II. By the other part of Mr. Pitt's system
of

of Reformation, a subsequent improvement of the Borough Representation would be ascertained, and carried into execution on similar terms : and, moreover, a principle of future and perpetual improvement in the Representation of Towns to an indefinite extent would be established.

When the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis shall have been rectified, in the mode and to the extent already described, it is proposed that a second sum be set apart to induce such decayed or inconsiderable Boroughs aforesaid, as may still remain, to make a farther surrender of the Right of electing Members of Parliament, in order that such Right may be transferred to the towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and other large unrepresented places, whenever such unrepresented places shall respectively petition Parliament for the same, also, that the elective franchise, exclusively enjoyed by a few inhabitants, Members of the Corporate Body in certain towns, may be imparted to the inhabitants, householders of such towns, occupying houses assessed to a certain small amount, on the voluntary application of such Corporate Bodies to Parliament to surrender their exclusive privileges.

The extension of the right of suffrage to many substantial householders in the Metropolis, the unrepresented towns, and those towns where the Right of Representation is at present

sent exclusively enjoyed by a few inhabitants, would be the necessary consequence of the several transfers, and communications of the Elective Right proposed in the two parts of this system. The admission of Copyholders to the Right of Voting at County Elections, would form a still greater, and a perfectly unexceptionable, addition to the Constituent Body ; for which, it is understood, that a separate bill would be provided accordingly. Regulations also for multiplying the places of Poll in the Counties, for the better ascertainment of the Right of Voting, for reducing expence, and preventing Bribery at Elections, would be included as subsidiary parts of the same system.

It is not denied that the nation may, when it sees cause, resume a public trust which has been exercised unfaithfully, or in a manner injurious to the common welfare. This is a principle which no friend to the Revolution and to the present Government can hesitate to acknowledge. But where the grievance to be removed implies an offence punishable by law, but not proved, in that case it seems not unbecoming the lenient spirit of a free Government instead of punishing without conviction, rather to devise some means by which the grievance in question may be abolished without hardship, if possible, to any individual. To conduct Political Reformation on these Principles, is not only an equitable mode of proceeding, but when the abuses

abuses complained of are interwoven with the interest of powerful Men, and supported by the habits and prejudices of the age, it is, in fact, the only mode in which the correction of such abuses can be attained.

In the case before the Public, Corruption in many instances may be justly suspected, but it has not been proved—Shall we then attempt a forcible abolition of the smaller Boroughs, as an act of power, grounded on no proof of guilt or breach of their public trust; or shall we prefer the voluntary surrender of that trust, obtained by lenient means? Surely, if each mode of disfranchisement were equally feasible, compensation in such circumstances would be preferable to compulsion, and better suited to the genius of the British nation. But if no misusage of their franchise, nor even a suspicion of guilt could be alledged against the smaller Boroughs, if the only ground of the forfeiture of their Rights, were stated to be the mere inequality or confessed impropriety, that a few inhabitants of the decayed Boroughs, should return Members to Parliament when many populous places are unrepresented; the compulsive deprivation of the Boroughs on that ground would be still more incompatible with the generous temper of our Countrymen.

In the last century, before Parliamentary Corruption was suspected to exist, or perhaps thought to be possible to any dangerous extent;

a transient redress of the very grievance now stated, actually took place. At that time many of the insignificant Boroughs were forcibly cut off by the powerful arm of Cromwell; and the Right of Representation was distributed afresh to the Counties and great Towns on Principles truly consonant with the spirit of the Constitution. The beneficial tendency of this change in our system of popular Representation has been admitted by the most judicious and impartial Writers; but so violent was the disgust excited by the arbitrary manner in which the measure was introduced, that even the power of Cromwell could not permanently support this great Constitutional Improvement.

And yet the milder treatment of the offensive Boroughs, recommended by Mr. Pitt, has not wholly escaped opposition. From a refinement that seems excessive, the offer of a compensation for their surrendered Rights has been censured, as *vicious and profligate*; whereas nothing seems more evident, than that a proposal to purchase the surrender of an elective trust, not justly forfeited by conviction of guilt, is *vicious and profligate* neither in *those who propose*, nor in *those who accept the terms*.—On the contrary, by removing the temptation to venality from both the upper and inferior classes of Men, in numerous instances it would prevent the growth of *vice and profligacy*; and would tend, by innocent and lawful means, alike to
 meliorate

meliorate the spirit of our Government, and to improve the morals of the People. Breaches of the judicial trust are nearly as criminal; nearly as dangerous to the Community, as breaches of the trust of Parliamentary Election: and yet, after the Rebellion in Scotland, when Government proposed to abolish the jurisdiction of certain Families in that Country, and to allow a pecuniary compensation for the loss of those hereditary powers, the measure was not thought to countenance judicial iniquity; its consequence has rather been found to be to clear the administration of justice in Scotland from the most oppressive abuses: and it may well be presumed that the purchase of a surrender of the rights of rotten Boroughs, would be equally effectual in this country to purge the Constituent and Representative Bodies from the grossest impurity of corruption.

Again, from an anxiety to maintain the doctrine of absolute forfeiture unimpaired, without the admission of which the Revolution neither can be justified, nor could have been effected, the principle of compensation to the Boroughs has been objected to; though, fortunately, rather in the tone of apprehension, and cautious admonition, than that of dislike and positive rejection. Undoubtedly, it never can be proper or expedient, to renounce the national right of resumption; but the disavowal of that right differs widely from a mere suspension of its

exercise. In almost every case, redress of grievances is more safely, more commodiously obtained by other means; and, therefore, no wise nation will ever resort to that ultimate authority, but on the exigence of great and inevitable necessity.

If on this point opinions should be agreed, the only questions to be asked are these: Is it prudent now to insist on the absolute forfeiture of small Boroughs? Is it wise to risque the fate of the Constitution on that demand? To which the obvious answer seems to be, a most decided negative.—For on the one hand, let it be considered, that by the offer of pecuniary satisfaction, the little venal Boroughs themselves may be induced to aid the cause of Reformation, and instead of instructing their Members to resist, may probably petition Parliament to confirm the offer. And even the great proprietors of Boroughs, hitherto most averse from the Reformation desired, may perhaps relax their opposition, when they have reflected that in pursuance of this lenient system, if the tender of public money should be to them no equivalent, they might still retain the unmolested possession of their invidious privilege, till a different sentiment should prevail.

On the other hand, let the advocates of a more vigorous measure, as they would term it, recollect the extensive power of those persons who are interested in the preservation of the smaller

smaller Boroughs, the prevalence of various unconstitutional prejudices, the utter aversion which has been testified by the nation to any harsh political operation, especially to the resumption of Chartered Rights; and, above all, the strenuous opposition which every motion in Parliament, tending, however moderately, to reform our system of Representation, has hitherto received from a great majority of Members; and it may be hoped they will be fully convinced, that an attempt to disfranchise the Boroughs by force, would be attended now with difficulties not less insuperable than those which formerly baffled Oliver Cromwell in a similar pursuit.

Upon the whole, the method of optional compensation suggested by Mr. Pitt is equitable and expedient: it is certain to produce the surrender desired; it is sure to satisfy the persons disfranchised; and it is calculated to produce that disfranchisement on the most economical terms which would be accepted, or which could be devised without employing force, or postponing the measure to a period too distant to satisfy the hope of the Public.

The whole debt incurred by the first operation would be discharged by the produce of the intended sinking fund in a single year; and thus the Nation would have the happiness to gain one substantial improvement of the Constitution for an expence truly inconsiderable when compared

pared with the magnitude of the benefit, which would be defrayed before the slightest perception of any national burthen incurred by the purchase could be impressed on the public mind. A much smaller sum would be fully sufficient to accomplish all the purposes of the subsequent part of the system.

The principal advantages proposed by the Plan may be thus briefly recapitulated: By the first part of it, thirty-six of the small decayed Boroughs would be abolished, and their right of Representation would be transferred to the large districts now inadequately represented. By the second part, an additional number of the rotten Boroughs would be disfranchised, and their right transferred to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and other large unrepresented towns: the exclusive privileges of Corporations in certain places, to return Members to Parliament, would be thrown open to the substantial householders in those places; and lastly, a principle of future improvement in the Borough Representation, as new unrepresented towns might arise, and ancient Boroughs might decline in population, would be established. By the several changes intended in the frame of our Representation, at least one hundred Members would be gained to the Public; and by the extension of the right of suffrage to the copyholders, &c. nearly 100,000 Electors would be added to the Constituent Body.

The

The regulations which would form the subsidiary parts of the system, though less splendid in their operation, than the proposed improvements in the frame of our Representation, would yet be found extremely beneficial, and indeed absolutely necessary, either to invigorate the Constitution as much as may be possible in its present enfeebled state, or to give its utmost effect and energy to the improved system which has been proposed. Expence, confusion, and delay are inconveniences to which even our best popular elections are in a certain degree liable. They are inconveniences which, by discouraging the free exercise of the right of Election in the larger communities, tend to aggravate the mischiefs that result from the defective state of the inferior Boroughs. To remedy these evils of expence, confusion, and delay, which chiefly affect the larger communities, regulations to multiply the places of poll, to ascertain more clearly the Right of Voting, and more effectually to reduce expence, would be established; and to suppress bribery, to which the inconsiderable Boroughs seem most exposed, the laws against that pernicious practice must be reinforced.

It is indisputable, that these changes would form a very substantial improvement of our popular Representation. The impartiality of the plan is also no small recommendation to the measure. It is not proposed that only the small

Boroughs open to general venality should be abolished; nor that the burgage-tenure Boroughs or those dependent on certain official Boards, should be the sole sacrifices to public advantage; the measure proposed is of a general nature, and would certainly be the means of lessening the number of Boroughs in every one of those obnoxious classes. It is true, that the additional Representation would be chiefly allotted to the Counties; but since many of the Boroughs proposed to be abolished are in the absolute power of families, possessed of great landed property, whose Representatives may be considered as County Members of the worst description, viz. landed Gentlemen, feeling and acknowledging no responsibility, whatever; and since many Members would be added to the Metropolis, to the great unrepresented towns, and to the trading inhabitants in many principal places, by the proposed extension of the right of suffrage;—the system of Mr. Pitt seems to observe as strict impartiality between the Landed and the Commercial Interests as the nature of the case could possibly admit. Each of these descriptions of Men would receive fresh security from the alteration proposed. No Community whatever could be injured by the adoption of this Plan of Reformation; and no Individual, however high or however low his station may be, could justly apprehend any consequence from it which would be hostile to his present state and condition.

dition in the Country. It is a mild though efficacious measure ; gradual in its operation, yet final in all appearance as a systematical change ; and proposing to work solely by consent, it contains in it none of those seeds of discontent and disturbance which too frequently disgrace political alterations conducted on other principles.

In all these views, Mr. Pitt's proposed Plan for Reforming our Representation is unexceptionable. It is, indeed, so evidently safe and beneficial, that reason seems to warrant a sanguine hope that it will meet the full approbation and support of the Public ; whose general sense, conveyed to Parliament next winter, in decent and respectful Petitions, can hardly fail to obtain, in a short time, the concurrence and sanction of the whole Legislature.

A P P E N D I X.

I.

ESTIMATE of the number of Boroughs that would probably be disfranchised, and the consequent addition of Members that would be made to the larger districts and to unrepresented Towns ; and also the number of large Towns in which the exclusive right of the Corporations to elect Members would be imparted to the sub-

stantial inhabitants, householders of the same respectively, provided Mr. Pitt's whole Plan should be adopted by Parliament.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| | Boroughs. |
| By the first part of his Plan would be disfranchised on voluntary surrender, in order to reinforce the Representation of the Counties and the Metropolis | 36 |
| By the second part, to give Representatives to certain large, unrepresented Towns, at least | 4 |

It is impossible to estimate the whole future disfranchisement under this head. But there are at least four large unrepresented Towns in immediate view, as fit to receive the Right of Representation; for which transfer, consequently, the disfranchisement of at least four Boroughs would be wanted.

| | |
|---|----|
| Total of disfranchised Boroughs | 40 |
| Corporations of large Towns that probably would surrender their exclusive Right of Representation | 10 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| | Members. |
| Addition to the Metropolis and the Counties | 72 |
| To unrepresented Towns | 8 |
| Representation thrown open in ten large Towns | 20 |
| Total addition of Representatives to the public | 100 |

II.

Estimate of the augmentation of the Constituent Body, that would be effected by the several extensions of the right of suffrage proposed by Mr. Pitt.

Householders, added in Marybone, Pancras, and other unrepresented parts of this Metropolis - - - - - 10,000

Unrepresented Freeholders, in the City of London - - - - - 1000

Copyholders in Middlesex, including the Metropolis - - - - - 7000

Copyholders in other parts of the Kingdom - - - - - 65,000

Householders, in Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds, independent of other unrepresented Towns, to whom the Right of returning Members to Parliament may be imparted - - - - - 9000

Householders, in Scarborough, Bury, Bath, &c. - - - - - 6500

Unrepresented Freeholders of Hullshire, probably about - - - - - 500

Total addition 99,000

NUMBER XVII.

Paper I.

THE SPEECH AND PROPOSITION OF THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE HENRY FLOOD,

IN THE

House of Commons of Great-Britain,

THURSDAY, MARCH 4th, 1790,

ON

A Reform of the Representation in Parliament.

SIR,

I RISE to propose a Reform in the Parliamentary Representation of the People. I cannot mention the subject without making you sensible of its importance: It is surrounded with difficulties; some that are inherent in the subject, and more that do not in reality belong to it—difficulties of private interest in the prepossessions of those, who, having benefited by the perversion of the Constitution, are unwilling to restore it. To such persons I have but one application to make, and that is, that they will suspend those prepossessions till they hear what

I

I have to propose; and then if they find that they can do a noble justice to their Country, without a personal injury to themselves, that they will receive, or, at least, that they will examine it. There is another sentiment which I wish to obviate, and that is, that it is preposterous for any man to attempt a Reform, in which, some years ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not succeed. Bowing to the superiority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, my answer is plain: First, that I have avoided the objections that militated most strongly against his plan—next, that the lights which he has thrown on the subject, are a great assistance now—that his declared patronage of the principle, as well as that of his Right Honourable antagonist, are a further encouragement; seeing that it cannot be supposed, that persons of their talents and information, who differ in so many other things, should concur in this, if it were not for the overbearing force of an irresistible conviction. I have to add, that such a principle, so vital to the Constitution, and yet so strongly opposed by private interest, is the very thing that cannot be expected to succeed at once; but that it is the very thing of which we may be certain, that with due perseverance it will succeed in the end. For myself I shall only say, that I have too much confidence in the magnanimity and wisdom of this House, and of the People of England, not to trust that they will

will rather consider the weight of the matter, than the weakness of the mover.

Under these auspices I begin, and will say what, but in a confidence in your virtue, I dare not say, that you are not the adequate Representatives of the People. That you are their legal Representatives I freely admit, and that as such you were entitled, as well as any other House of Commons, to all that was resolved, with respect to your powers, in the last Session of Parliament. And I appeal to the candour of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, I am sure, will readily acknowledge, that the words "full and free Parliament," that were used upon that occasion, were not used indirectly to anticipate the present question; nor to declare the adequacy of that Representation, the inadequacy of which he has himself arraigned. But I go farther, and say, that you are not only the legal Representatives of the People, but that you are an highly useful and honourable Council—a Council, which, in any other Government of Europe, would be a great acquisition!—But, to the honour of the British Constitution be it spoken, that the British Constitution entitles us to something better; namely, an adequate Representative: now this it cannot be, unless freely and frequently elected by the Body of the People. Before I go farther into this subject, however, I must stop to notice a declaration of a Right Hon. Member, (Mr. Fox) that he was an enemy
to

to absolute Government, whether in the form of Monarchy, Aristocracy, or Democracy—I go farther, and am an enemy to any two of those orders combined, without the intervention of the third. And though I do not distinguish between any of the three, so as to express a preference; yet I have a right to say; that as all just Governments must be founded in the choice of the People, and must have their benefit for its end; so it is clear, that the popular order of Government is at least as indispensable, and as valuable, as either of the other. Now what is the popular order of Government in the British Constitution? It is the Representation of the People; that great arcanum and wise mystery of our Government, by which it so much excels all the Governments of antiquity. By this principle, though scattered over a great country, a great people can possess an efficient influence in their own Legislature, without being Legislators themselves. But how, not by the shadow, but by the substance of Representation; or, in other words, by an actual, and not a virtual Representative. Now in what does actual Representation consist? In this: that as, by the general law of the Constitution, the majority is to decide for the whole, the Representative must be chosen by a Body of Constituents, whereof the elective franchise may extend to the majority of the People. For what can be so evident as that, if the Constituent Body consisted of but
one

one thousand for the whole nation, the Representatives chosen by that thousand could not, in any rational sense, be the actual Representative of the People? It is equally clear in reason, that nothing less than a Constituent Body, formed on a principle that may extend to the majority, can be constitutionally adequate to the return of an actual Representative of the People; and that unless the People be actually represented, they are not constitutionally represented at all. I admit, that property to a certain degree is a necessary ingredient to the elective power; that is to say, that franchise ought not to go beyond property, but at the same time to say, that it ought to be as nearly commensurate to it as possible. Property, by the original principle of the Constitution, was the source of all power, both elective and legislative;—the *liberi tenentes*, including at that time, in effect, the whole property of the Country, and extending to the mass of the People, were the elective body. The persons whom they chose to Parliament, sat in the right of the property of their electors; and the Barons sat in right of their own baronies; that is to say, of their own property. At that time they were not creatures of Royal patent, as now. But now that the Lords are creatures of Royal patent merely, and that freehold property is a very inferior part of the property of the Nation, the national property is not as fully represented as it was originally

nally, and as it ought to be still by the Constitution. The Constituent Body is also defective in point of number, as well as in point of property. The whole number of electors is infinitely short of what it ought to be; and, what is worse, the majority of the Representatives who decide for the whole, are chosen by a number of electors not exceeding six or eight thousand; though these Representatives are to act for eight millions of People. A new body of Constituents is therefore wanting; and in their appointment two things are to be considered; one, that they should be numerous enough, because numbers are necessary to the spirit of liberty; the other, that they should have a competent degree of property, because that is conducive to the spirit of order. To supply this deficiency, both in the Representative and Constituent Body, my proposition shall be directed.

But I am told this is not the time.—And why? Because, forsooth, there are disturbances in France. Now first I say, that if those disturbances were ten times greater, than with every exaggeration they are represented to be, yet that mass of confusion and ruin would only render the argument more completely decisive in favour of a timely and temperate Reform here. And why? because it is only from want of timely and temperate Reform there, that these evils have fallen upon France. They could not begin

begin with reparation in France, there was nothing to repair : they did not begin with ruin, they found ruin accomplished to their hands. Neither the King nor his Ministers knew where to find the Constitution. The King called upon the Notables (no legal body) to see where the Constitution was to be found : Not a vestige of it could be recovered. They had lived so long as slaves, that they had unlearned the Constitution ; they were driven to speculation, because practice had vanished ; and hence all those calamities which have excited such tragical exclamations here.

To what have the convulsions at former times in England been owing ? To the same want of temperate and timely correction. Had the encroachments of the Tudors been seasonably repressed, Charles the First might not have mistaken those usurpations to be his constitutional prerogative ; and so the miseries of the nation might have been avoided. Had not the evil practices of Charles the Second been so tamely endured, as to encourage the tyranny of James, the last Revolution might not have become necessary. I am no friend to Revolutions, because they are an evil : I am, therefore, a friend to timely Reform, and for this reason, that it renders Revolutions unnecessary ; whilst they who oppose such Reform, may be enemies to Revolution in their hearts, but they are friends to it by their folly.

Another

Another strong argument from the situation of France, in favour of a Reform, is this, that France will improve her Constitution. Now what has enabled this Country to be at all times equal, and oftentimes superior, to France? Not her climate or soil, which are not superior; nor her territory nor population, which are so greatly inferior; it is only in the excellence of her Government she has found her superiority. What follows? that if France improves her Government, you must restore yours. Again, What is your situation as to external danger? France, the great object of external danger to England, can no longer give alarm; during her disturbances she cannot have the power; and after her Liberty is established, she will not have the inclination to make ambitious war. The better her Government is, the more rational will be her Counsels: the more rational her Counsels, the more pacific they will be. Kings may hope for glory, and their Ministers and Minions may hope for plunder from warfare; but what can the People expect from an ambitious war? Nothing but an accumulation of taxes, and an effusion of blood. Now if a state of external danger would be a strong argument against a Reform; a state of external safety is as strong an argument in its favour. Again, What is your situation at home? You are not in a state of dependency on the one hand, that might tempt you to a measure of despair, nor in a state

VOL. II. M m on

on the other hand of that drunken prosperity by which Nations are rendered ignorant of the present, and regardless of the future. You are in that happy medium which is the best friend to sobriety of judgment, and consequently the fittest state for framing a rational and temperate Reform; the only one that I would propose, and the only one to which I would consent.

But it is dangerous, it is said, to tell the People of England that they are not duly represented. And is this indeed a secret? Are the People of England in such a state of infancy, as not to know that they do not elect those Representatives for whom they do not vote? No; but if ever it was a secret to them, it has long since been divulged; it was proclaimed to them in a loud voice in the Middlesex Election; when a minority was voted to be a majority; a determination so iniquitous as to shake the fabric of Parliament to its base. What was the consequence? The House of Commons in a moment of repentance erased the record of it, and stripped themselves for ever of their former judicial Power in Elections, in expiation and contrition for this abuse of it. Now what was this abuse? It was making a minority do in one County, what could only be constitutionally done by a majority: and the danger of it in example was, that it might be extended to other Counties. But what is the abuse of which I complain, when I complain of the inadequacy of Representation?

sentation? It is, that a very small minority of the People do now act for the whole, in electing the *entire* Representative of the Nation. Now this is as much a greater abuse than the former, as the whole is greater than a small part; and as one was expunged by the Parliament, the other ought to be expunged by the People.

Again—This secret of inadequate Representation was told to the People in thunder in the American war; which began with virtual Representation, and ended in dismemberment.—To the inadequacy of Representation I charge that war. Profuse Counsels attendant on unconstitutional majorities had left upon you a debt, which induced the Minister to look to America for taxes. There the war began; the instinctive selfishness of mankind made the People and Parliament wish that others should be taxed rather than themselves. At first, and until America resisted, I agree that this wish was common to the Parliament and People—but when America resisted, and the measure came to deliberate judgement, the People were the first to recover their senses; whilst the Minister with his majority went on to ruin. I say that the inadequacy of Representation, as it was the cause, so it was the only Argument that was attempted in justification of that War. When the American exclaimed that he was not represented in the British House of Commons, because he was not an elector; he was told, that a very small

part of the People of England were Electors: and that he was therefore in the same state, in which an infinite majority of the People of England were placed. As they could not call this actual, they invented a new name for it, and called it Virtual Representation; and gravely concluded that America was represented. The argument no doubt was fallacious; it was perfectly sufficient, however, to impose on multitudes, in a Nation, wishing that others should be taxed rather than themselves; and who were in the habit of thinking that the Americans being an inferior species of beings, they ought to be contented with their situation, though they did not partake at all in the elective capacity. The influence of Corruption within doors, and of this fraud of argument without, continued the American war.

It terminated in separation, as it began in this empty vision of a Virtual Representative; and in its passage from one of these points to the other, it swept away part of the glory, and more of the territory of Great-Britain, with the loss of forty thousand lives, and one hundred millions of treasure. Virtual Parliaments, and an inadequate Representation, have cost you enough abroad already; take care they do not cost you more at home, by costing you your Constitution.

But the People of England have not only read this secret in the dead and decisive letter
of

of events, but they have imbibed it from the living oracles of their ablest Statesmen. When the city of London, the greatest and freest Metropolis of the World, applied to Lord Chatham to assist them in shortening the duration of Parliaments, what was the answer of that great Minister; it was this, that shortening the duration of Parliaments alone would not be sufficient; that alone it might do hurt, that the Representation itself must amended; and his proposition was, to infuse a fresh portion of vigor into the Representative Body, by an addition of County Representatives; leaving the rotten Boroughs to drop off by time. The authority of the Son, both when a Minister, and when not a Minister, has been added to that of the Father. The authority of many other of the most eminent Men might be cited in addition, indeed of all, except those, who are wise enough to startle at restoring, as if it were innovating the Constitution; and who grow enamoured of abuses, provided they are old.

I now come to the remedy for these abuses— but first I will remind you of the objections that have been made to the former propositions upon this subject; because it is the shortest method of shewing that my proposition is free from them. It was not objected to Lord Chatham's plan, that it would make a considerable increase to the present number of Representatives. But it was objected that the Freeholders were already represented—that his plan did not give

franchise to any of that great and responsible Body of Men who are now non-electors—that, on the contrary, it increased the disparity between them and the Freeholders. It was further objected, that this might happen; that as so many more of the great interests in each County might be accommodated by this greater number of seats which were to be disposed of by the same number of Freeholders, that those greater interests might more probably combine, that the Independent Freeholders might become less significant, and County Elections thereby become less uninfluenced, and less constitutional than at present. To the plan of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was not objected, that he introduced a new Body of Electors, namely, the Copyholders. It was admitted that by adding them to the Freeholders, he had diminished for so much the objections that had been made to his father's plan; but that except for so much, the same objections remained as to that part of the subject. Touching his plan as to the Boroughs, it was objected that to disfranchise them might, indeed, be arbitrary; but that to buy them out would be to build Reform, not on the purity, but corruption of franchise—that the purchase might never be effected—that certainly it must be slow; and that the worst Boroughs, those of the Government, would never resign; but would be comparatively increased in their importance by the resignation of others—that the Reform was to wait for the result of all these

contin-

contingencies; and at all events that it was not to begin till the expiration of the Parliament, which had but just commenced; during all which time it would lie open to be repealed, before it began to operate.

My proposition is free from all these objections; for it is, that one hundred Members should be added, and that they should be elected by a numerous and a new body of responsible Electors; namely, the resident Householders in every County—resident, I say, because that the principle of the Constitution is so strongly in favour of residence, that it ordained that no Non-resident could be an Elector: and with reason; first because residents must be best acquainted with every local circumstance; and next, because they can attend at every place of election, with the least inconvenience and expence to themselves or to the Candidate.—Householders, I say, because being masters, or fathers of families, they must be sufficiently responsible to be entitled to franchise. There is no Country in the world in which the Householders of it are considered as the rabble,—no Country can be said to be free, where they are not allowed to be efficient Citizens—they are exclusive of the rabble, the great mass of the People—they are the natural guards of popular Liberty in the first stages of it—without them it cannot be retained; as long as they have this constitutional influence, and till they become

generally corrupt, popular Liberty cannot be taken away. Whenever they do become generally corrupt, it cannot be retained; neither will it be long possessed, if they have not this constitutional influence; for the liberty of a nation, like the honour of individuals, can never be safe but in their own custody. The Householders of this Country have a better right to consideration and franchise, than those of any other Country, because they pay more for it. It is admitted, that every individual of this Country, one with another, pays fifty shillings a-year to the revenue in tax. The master or father of a family must contribute, in proportion, for himself, and for each individual of his family, even to the child that is hanging at the breast. Who shall say that this class of Men ought to be confounded with the rabble? Who shall dare to say, that they ought to be prescribed from franchise? They maintain the affluence of the rich, the dignity of the noble, the majesty of the Crown; they support your fleets and your armies—And who shall say, that they shall not have this Right to protect their Liberty?

I have stated the inadequacy of the Representative Body, compared with the Constituent Body even as it now stands; I have stated the inadequacy of the Constituent Body itself as it now is, compared with what it ought to be; I shall now state the effect of this double inadequacy upon

upon the balance of the Constitution. The Constitution consists of three orders, one Monarchical, one Aristocratic, and one Popular: the balance consists in maintaining the equipoise between them. This balance was lost in the first part of the Norman æra; it was recovered in some degree after; it was impaired again in the period of the Tudors and Stuarts; at the Revolution it is supposed to have been again recovered. Let us see whether it has not been impaired since. The Lords have been the most stationary part, yet by a great increase of their numbers of late, they have carried with them into the Lords, patrimonial and private Boroughs; thereby obtaining an influence over the House of Commons which does not constitutionally belong to them. But the great alteration has happened on the part of the Crown. And here, for brevity, I will appeal to the authority of a great Judge that is no more. Mr. Justice Blackstone has stated all the cautionary provisions that have been made to guard against prerogative; he has then enumerated the various sources of influence which have accrued to the Crown in place of those prerogatives; and the conclusion of such a Man, a lawyer, looking to be a judge; of principles sufficiently Monarchical; writing in his closet, and appealing to the cool justice of the latest posterity; is, What? That influence has gone so far beyond prerogative, that, at the moment he wrote, the
 Liberty

Liberty of England was rather to be found in the virtue of the Prince, than in the strength of the Constitution. And what remedy does he intimate? An amendment in the Representation of Parliament. Mr. Hume, a prerogative writer, taking the same view of the subject, has said, that the euthanasia of the British Constitution must be arbitrary power. What did the House of Commons say in their memorable resolution? That the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished, Does any Man doubt this authority? Were they not witnesses of the fact, as well as judges of the proposition? But it does not rest on their authority; an act of the whole Legislature has since confirmed their words, they have been made statute by the Act of Reform that passed afterwards. But what has happened since? an East-India Bill has passed, and a Declaratory law. And what is the consequence? That no Man who has any modesty, or who ever expects to be credited, will deny, that by those laws more influence has been conveyed to the Crown, or the Minister, than was subtracted by that Act of Reform. The little influence of the whole People on the Representative Body is thus noticed by Sherlock, a Bishop. In his Treatise on the Test and Corporation Laws, he says, that though the Dissenters were but a twentieth part of the People, yet if they got into Corporations, the petty Boroughs being so numerous, they might by them

them obtain a majority in the House of Commons against the whole Nation. In a word, it is undeniable that a great majority of the House of Commons are under another influence than that of the People. It is nonsense to call this a Representative of the People: the balance of the Constitution is therefore gone; it must be restored, or the Constitution will be undone. The only thing to be decided, is, how it shall be restored? It may be restored by opening all the Boroughs, so as to make them places of popular and constitutional election. But will private interest hear of that? No. What follows? that there is but one mode left for restoring the balance, and that is, by an additional body of Constitutional Representatives, chosen by an additional body of Constitutional Electors—either then this must be done, or the evil must continue: nor will that be all; for, according to the nature of evil, it will propagate itself till it overwhelms what remains of your Constitution. Is the addition of Members objected to? It was not objected to Lord Chatham. It was not argued that the integrity or wisdom of Parliament was confined to the number of five hundred and fifty-eight. No—it was felt that this House is never tumultuary, but when it ceases to be a public, by becoming a party assembly. It was therefore felt, that as by the super-addition of such Members, this House would become more a public, and less a party assembly; it would
by

by course, become less tumultuary, and rise in dignity and order. But if this be a serious objection, remove it; there are an hundred Boroughs that might be limited to the return of one Representative instead of two. I do not propose it; but I desire that you will either propose it, or not object this addition to me. In a word, the People have lost their constitutional influence in the Legislature. Instead of having the whole, they are far from having a majority in their own Representative—the majority is against them—and the majority decides for the whole. The House of Commons is a second rate Aristocracy instead of a popular Representation—the pillar of the Constitution is undermined—it is nonsense to say that every thing is well, when every thing is in danger—every Country in Europe was once as free as England—in every Country of Europe it was said that every thing was well; till they found that every thing was otherwise: they went to bed saying they were free, and they wakened bond-men.

Let us not flatter ourselves that there is a destiny peculiar to England—She has lost her Liberty more than once—it is our business to take care that she shall never lose it again. Machiavel says wisely, that no free Government can last that is not often brought back to its first Principles—and why? Because the excellence of a free Government is, to controul the evil passions and practices of rulers. What is
the

the consequence? Those passions and practices are at perpetual war with such a Constitution—they make a constant effort to undermine or evade this barrier which is opposed to them.—What is perpetually assailed, must be perpetually defended—what is incessantly sapped, must be incessantly repaired. It is nonsense to say that the English Constitution, because it was once the best in the world, can never want Reformation. A bad Government cannot easily become worse—it therefore may not want and certainly does not deserve reparation. A good Government does easily become worse—it is with difficulty it can be preserved even by vigilance; and of all things in the world it best deserves to be repaired. The proposition which I make to you is practicable—that cannot be denied—it cannot be denied to be efficient—it will add a body of responsible Constituents, of such number that a majority of the People may have the exercise of franchise; thus it cures the defect of the Constituent Body—and on the Representative Body it will have this good effect that there will be no longer a decided majority in the House of Commons, under another choice and another influence, than that of the People—it leaves every County, City, Town, Borough, Manor, &c. as it finds them—it molests none of the private proprietors of that which ought not to be private. And what does it ask of them in return? Nothing but that they will suffer the
Constitution

Constitution to be indemnified; and the influence of the People to re-enter the Representative. To carry all this into execution would require but one short provision; namely, that the Sheriff of each County be required by himself, and his deputies, to take the poll of the resident Householders of his County, in each parish on the same day? thus this great remedy to the Constitution may be obtained in one day; with less tumult and expence than attends upon the election of a diminutive Borough; thus the Representative will be chosen, as he ought to be, by the People; and by shortening the duration of Parliaments, he will continue to act as if he were so chosen.

Montesquieu has said that a free People will pay more taxes, with greater alacrity than a People that are not free; and he adds the reason, because they have a compensation in the Rights they enjoy. The People of England pay fifteen millions and a-half annually to Revenue. This purchase they pay for the Constitution—shall they not have the benefits of it—every individual pays fifty shillings a-year. How many enjoyments must every inferior individual relinquish; and how much labour must he undergo to enable him to make that contribution? No People ever deserved better of Government than the People of this Country at this moment, they have not only submitted with alacrity to this enormous mass of taxation, but when the health
or

or the Rights of their Sovereign were at stake, they gathered round the Throne with unexampled zeal—Can such a People be denied their privileges? Can their privileges be a subject of indifference or remissness to this House? I cannot believe it; and therefore I move for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the Representation of the People in Parliament.

MR. FLOOD'S REPLY.

The Honourable Member (Sir James Johnston) has desired that I should postpone my Motion for a century; did I think that I should have an opportunity to move it at the end of a century, perhaps I might comply; the Honourable Member objects impracticability to my proposition, as if it were opposed by the articles of the Union. Undoubtedly if Scotland were not to have her due proportion of additional Members, the objection would be just; but I not only mean to give to Scotland her share in this additional Representation; but for one I would consent to her having a more liberal proportion than that which was assigned at the Union. I admit that the united Parliament cannot take from Scotland any of the advantages of the Union; but no Man has ever held, that they can add nothing to the benefits of it. And whilst I have the authority of Lord Chatham, to shew that the Union cannot be a bar to an increase of the Representation; and that of the
Chancellor

Chancellor of the Exchequer, to shew that it cannot obstruct a Parliamentary Reform, the Honourable Baronet must excuse me, if I prefer their reasons in favour of a Reform, to his prepossessions against it.

Whatever may be the fate of my proposition to-night, I am glad that I have moved it. The subject was considered as dead by the enemies of it—but the friends of it will now perceive, that it is alive; had we suffered it to continue during the whole of this Parliament in that swoon into which it had fallen, the vital principle might have been so far extinguished, that the next Parliament could never have restored it. I have given an opportunity to some of the most distinguished Members of the most distinguished parts of the kingdom, to express their approbation of this proposition. I have given an opportunity to a Right Hon. Member (Mr. Fox) to declare himself again a friend to an amendment of the Representative, in those clear and unequivocal terms which best become the manliness of his talents; and I consider myself as eminently fortunate that my plan has so far recommended itself to a judgement of such authority, that he has not hesitated to say, that it is the best plan which has yet been suggested; and to add, that the introduction of the resident Householders is well adapted to give Representation to that mixed kind of property which is now become general in this kingdom. I am glad to acknowledge

acknowledge myself to be further indebted to him for having answered the objections of a Right Honourable Member (Mr. Wyndham) so as to leave me little to say beyond that acknowledgement; in a superior tone of argument he has proved to that gentleman, (and by a friendly voice) the emptiness of his objections; and therefore whilst I admit with pleasure the urbanity and neatness of the Right Honourable Gentleman's reply, and the wit and humour with which it was replete, I have only to reiterate that it was he and not I, that assumed every thing which it was requisite to prove, and that his speech was like a fair vision that captivates the eye by an agreeable illusion, but that vanishes before the touch, and fades into annihilation: so far indeed was the Right Honourable Member transported by his enthusiasm against a Reform, as to say, that if such determinations as that of the Middlesex Election had been general, he would suppose them to be right; now this is nothing less than to say, that right and wrong are but empty sounds, and that we are only to inquire what has been done—not whether it ought to have been done, or no.

There are instances however in which wit and humour, and in which poignancy and elegance, are not to be complained of, but in which a certain bluntness bordering on coarseness, and even illiberality, may have attempted to usurp the ear. Who would have thought it? The

VOL. II. N n ghost

ghost of French tumult has again been excited, to conjure down if possible the dangerous spirit of Reform; and a grave Member of the British Parliament, in the gravest of all possible harangues, has imaged to himself that a Missionary from the National Assembly of France has escaped into this House to make the present Proposition. I am not a native of France—I am a Citizen of the British Empire—I am a Member of this House—I appeal to you whether my conduct has been that of an Alien or an Adventurer—whether I have often trespassed on your attention—whether I ever did so but on an occasion of importance, and whether I then wearied you with ostentation or prolixity. I am as independent in fortune and in nature as the Honourable Member himself (Mr. Powis). I have no fear but that of doing wrong; nor can I have an hope on the subject, beyond that of doing some service before I die. The accident of my situation has not made me a partizan, and I never lamented that situation till now, that I feel myself as unprotected, as I fear the People of England will be found to be on this occasion.

An Honourable Member (Col. Phipps) has said, that a Reform is unnecessary, because, upon the last General Election, the People were able to manifest their inclinations in favour of his friends—be it so; I never said that there was no such thing as a popular Election in the kingdom;
but

but if, in the miserable destitution of popular Election which now prevails, the inclinations of the Public could shew themselves at all, how much more would they have been manifested, had the Representative been adequate? Would the Honourable Member be sorry that his friends were stronger than they are? If the position of the Hon. Member be true, he ought to be a friend to Reform; if it be not true, he might have spared the observation.

But I am in nothing more pleased that I have made this proposition, than that it has given to the Chancellor of the Exchequer an opportunity to express his persevering sentiment in favour of a Reform, notwithstanding he has moved the question of adjournment. Had I seen that there could be a circumstance in the present moment, that could render the restoration of the Constitution improper, I should never have proposed it; but I neither did, nor can conceive such a possibility; the time I thought, for various reasons, the properest in the world, and for this amongst others—this would have been the time in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Reform would have begun to operate, if his proposition had succeeded; and, therefore, I could not think it an improper time to find a substitute for it. * But every thing, it is said, is well; this is true in a part, but beyond a part, it is not true. You are growing in prosperity, that is well; but you are two hundred and

forty millions in debt ; all the genius of administration has not pointed out any mode for the effectual liquidation of it ; nor has any man pointed out the resources for another war. Who will say that this is well ? I do not despond, however, it is not my nature ; and I have thought too often and too anxiously on the subject, not sometimes to flatter myself with a glimpse of such a possibility. But this I am bold to affirm, that the measures for that purpose must be so strong and systematical, as to require a stronger House of Commons than an inadequate Representation can furnish. There is an influence that will always disturb every thing that is great, in pursuit of every thing that is little. This influence cannot lie in a Constitutional Representative : Such a Representative, therefore, is the greatest of public blessings, and all public calamities are associated with the want of it.

The higher classes of every state are subject to be debauched by ambition, and the lower by necessity ; the middle classes alone can be depended upon. These extremes of the State are apt to unite to overwhelm every thing between ; it is the business, therefore, of wise statesmen to render the middle ranks so strong, as to be able to resist this union of the extremes. The Constituent Body is the political army of the State ; an able general will make the center of his army strong, if he be in danger from the wings.

wings. On this principle I introduce four hundred thousand responsible Citizens from the middle ranks of the People, to fortify the Constitution, and to render it impregnable. Such Men cannot gain by convulsion ; such Men are too numerous to combine, and their position is a position of moderation, because it is a state of mediocrity.

But the Chancellor of the Exchequer wishes me to withdraw my motion, and I wish to comply with his request ; but having satisfied my own mind as to the propriety both of the time and of the measure, and having been encouraged by the opinion of others, I feel that it does not become me to retract. It is not pertinacity, but an idea, whether erroneous or not, of public decorum that interposes to prevent it, and compels me to leave the fate of the question to the determination of the House.

Paper II.

**Resolutions at a General Meeting held at the
Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, on
Friday the 23d of April, 1790, of the Friends
to a Parliamentary Reform,**

**JOHN INGRAM LOCKHART, Esq; in the
Chair,**

Resolved,

THAT although all times are proper to restore the Constitution in that fundamental point, the Representation of the People in Parliament, in which it is acknowledged to be essentially impaired, this is peculiarly a proper time.

Resolved, That although Ministers and Parties have always had objects which in their view have been more important, the People can have none greater, or of more present importance, than that of a Reform in the Representation in Parliament,

Resolved, That the indifference or disinclination of Parliament to this great object is no ground of just surprize or discouragement, to the People; especially as the Public has not continued

tinued to call the attention of Parliament to a point, on which it will not be fixed, except by a persevering call from the Community: since no substantial Reform can be expected to move from Parliament to the People, but from the People to Parliament.

Resolved, That whenever the People shall re-
new Associations in their several Counties, Cities,
and Towns, and shall unite their efforts, perse-
veringly and with order, for the attainment of
a Reform in the Representation, a Plan suffici-
ently simple and comprehensive may assuredly
be formed; and when thus supported, cannot
fail of success.

Resolved, That a Committee be now ap-
pointed, for the purpose of promoting such As-
sociations, and of consulting, preparing, and
bringing forward, a Plan respecting the Election
and Duration of Parliaments, in such manner as
shall be most adapted to give, to whatever Plan
of Reform shall be ultimately approved, the
weight and the authority of the National Judg-
ment.

Resolved, That any seven of the said Com-
mittee be a sufficient number for the dispatch
of business.

Resolved, That the said Committee be a
Committee of enquiry and correspondence.

Resolved, That the said Committee have
power of appointing, from their own number,
Sub-Committees, as they shall judge expedient.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the said Committee, to consider whether some convenient and effectual method for the registering of Votes; for the taking of the Poll by Districts, and in a mode least liable to influence, corruption, or tumult; for admitting other descriptions of Persons, not otherwise already possessed of it, to the exercise of the right of suffrage; and for so admitting them, as may correct the gross partiality of Representation—may not be satisfactorily proposed as principal parts of a Plan for a Parliamentary Reform.

Resolved, That it be recommended to the Committee to consider to what limits the duration of Parliaments may be most beneficially reduced; and to request the opinion of such other Associations as may be formed upon this and the other subjects proposed to their enquiry. And respecting the duration, this Meeting is persuaded the Committee will have in their view the ancient and frequently confirmed usage of short Parliaments; and that they will not in their proposal admit a longer term than a just necessity shall appear to them to require.

Resolved, That the said Committee do report whatever shall occur to them on the subjects recommended to their investigation, to the next General Meeting.

Resolved, That the Committee do meet on Wednesday the 28th instant, at seven o'clock in the Evening, at this House.

Resolved,

Resolved, That a General Meeting of the Friends to a Parliamentary Reform be held at this House on Wednesday the 19th of May, at seven o'clock in the Evening, to deliberate on the most effectual mode of obtaining that great end.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Henry Flood, M. P. for his services to the Public, in reviving their attention to the cause of Parliamentary Reform.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Capel Loft, Esq; for the very active part he has taken this Evening.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman.

Resolved, That these Resolutions be printed in the Public Papers.

JOHN INGRAM LOCKHART,
Chairman.

Paper III.

*Resolutions at a General Meeting held at the
Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, on
Wednesday the 19th of May 1790, of the Friends
to a Parliamentary Reform,*

CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; in the Chair.

Resolved unanimously,

THAT a Restoration of the Right of adequate Representation to the People is the best consolation which can be given them for the heavy burthens which they now bear, as well as those additional ones which probably may be soon imposed upon them, and which a war must necessarily occasion.

Resolved unanimously, That the alarm betrayed in the House of Commons by the enemies of Reform, on the late Proposition of the Right Hon. Henry Flood, demonstrates that the present moment is peculiarly auspicious to the attempts of the People of England for the recovery of their just rights.

Resolved unanimously, That we are justified in considering objections to the present time

as an improper season for attempting the remedy of that intolerable evil, the present state of Parliamentary Representation, as a mean attempt to conceal an interested opposition to the measure itself.

Resolved unanimously, That the same arguments by which it has been attempted to justify the present state of Parliamentary Representation would equally serve to vindicate it, even if the County of Middlesex alone had been accustomed to elect all those, who would in that case probably be called the Representatives of the People; a state of the Representation which we suppose no man out of Parliament would be so ignorant as to approve, or (if approving for interested purposes) so profligate as to defend.

Resolved, unanimously, That the apostasy of the most ostentatious advocates of Parliamentary Reform, instead of damping ought to stimulate the activity of the People of England, as they may from hence learn, that the attainment of this great object, by any other means but their own spirit and virtue, is totally hopeless.

Resolved, unanimously, That the Friends of a Parliamentary Reform, confirmed in their resolution by those events that have passed since their last General Meeting, will seriously proceed towards the attainment of their object.

Resolved, That an extraordinary General Meeting be called, within eight days after the
Dissolution

Dissolution of Parliament whenever it shall happen.

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this Meeting be printed in the public papers.

Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman.—Adjourned.

CAPEL LOFFT, Chairman.

Paper IV.

R U L E S A N D O R D E R S

OF THE

MANCHESTER CONSTITUTIONAL SOCIETY.

INSTITUTED OCTOBER, 1790.

I.

THAT the object of this Institution is to attend to, and consider of, every public occurrence by which the general Liberties of the People may be affected, and to propagate information, concerning any circumstance, or measure, hostile, or advantageous to the Rights of the People.

2. That the number of Members be indefinite.
3. That an annual subscription of half a Guinea be paid in advance by each Member.

4. That

4. That the Meetings of this Society be held for the present at the Bridgewater Arms, at seven o'Clock in the Evening of the first Tuesday in every Month.

5. That Candidates shall be proposed and seconded, before any other business of the Meeting is commenced; that their names, professions, and abode shall be immediately written down, and affixed on some conspicuous place in the Room where such Meeting is held; and that they be elected, or otherwise, at the next Meeting, by a majority of the Members present. The nomination of Candidates to be the first business of the Meeting, and Elections the last. The mode of election, to be by Ballot.

6. That a President be chosen every Night by a majority of the Members present, at the hour of meeting; and that a Secretary, and a Treasurer, be appointed annually.

7. That a fine of one Shilling be imposed on each Member for non-attendance, unless in the case of sickness, or absence from Manchester, at the distance of ten miles.

8. That the Members of this Society dine together annually on the 14th of July.

9. That the expences of the Society for printing, room, fire, &c. shall be defrayed out of the funds of the Society; and in case of information to be conveyed to the Public, by the circulation of any Pamphlet, or Tract, too expensive

five for such funds, Voluntary donations shall be admissible, but not requested.

10. That no publication shall issue under the sanction of this Society, which shall not first have been read, and approved of, by a majority of the Members present, at each of two successive Meetings.

11. That the Society shall not be pledged to any law, regulation, measure, or opinion, which shall not first have been proposed at one Meeting, to be discussed at the next; of which the Secretary shall also give due notice, in the interval immediately succeeding the meeting at which the proposal may be made.

12. That the Secretary be requested and empowered to correspond, as occasion may require, with every other similar institution in this, and if need be, in any other kingdom.

13. That special meetings may be convened in case of any business that requires speedy consideration, on the requisition of twelve Members communicated to the Secretary, provided such special meeting be not holden sooner than one Week from the date of the requisition, and that notice thereof, and of the business intended to be discussed, be transmitted to each Member as soon as may be after the Secretary has received the requisition.—No measure whatever to be adopted at any special meeting, excepting such as shall be expressly mentioned in the notice of the Meeting.

14. That

14. That the signature of the Secretary be affixed to every Publication, which shall issue under the sanction of this Society.

15. That if any Person be thought an improper Member, he may be expelled by a majority of the Members present at one Meeting,* provided such expulsion be confirmed by a majority present at the next Meeting.

16. That the seven Resolutions of the 5th of October be presented, or read,* to every Person desirous of becoming a Member of this Society, who shall declare his assent to them, before he can be proposed.

17. That upon the decision of any motion, the Minority, or any part of them, shall have a right to enter their dissent, with their reasons for it, in the Society's Journal.

MEETING of this SOCIETY,

October 5th, 1790.

Resolved unanimously,

1. THAT in every civil Community, the legitimate authority of the Governors, can only be derived from the consent of the Governed.
2. That the happiness of the People governed ought to be the sole end and aim of all civil government.
3. That public honours and emoluments can only be due for services conferred on the State.
4. That every Person, from the highest to the lowest, appointed to and accepting of any office or trust for the benefit of the Community, is ultimately responsible to the People for the complete discharge of the duties of it.
5. That actions only, and not opinions, are the proper objects of civil jurisdiction.
6. That no law or statute can be fairly made, which is not enacted by and with the consent of a majority of the People, given either expressly by themselves, or by means of a full, fair, and adequate Representation.
7. That the People of Great-Britain are not fully, fairly, and adequately represented in Parliament; and that the defective state of the Representation of this Country, and the extended duration of Parliaments, require a speedy and effectual

effectual Reform, and are objects to which the attention of this Society ought to be particularly directed.

AT A MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

February 1, 1791,

Ordered,

THAT one thousand Copies of the Rules and Orders of the Society, and of the seven Resolutions of the 5th of October last, be printed for the use of the Members.

SAM. JACKSON, Secretary.



Paper V.

ADDRESS

FROM THE

SOCIETY for CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

IN SHEFFIELD,

To the PUBLIC.

AS the necessity of a REFORMATION, by the revival of our ancient privileges in the Constitution of our Government, is so well known, and so generally allowed, we apprehend it unnecessary to make any apology for declaring, That a temperate and dispassionate enquiry into the evils of our Government, it is presumed, can be the only means of redressing our grievances; without having recourse to the least efforts of violence. To allay, therefore, the heat of party, to prepare the PUBLIC MIND for deliberate investigation, and to prove that our LIBERTIES may be renovated without the destruction of the Constitution, or personal sacrifice, is the immediate purpose, endeavour, and intent of this Society, for which the patronage of all parties is solicited.

solicited. Desirous of preserving peace, order, and security, the Members of this Society consider on the intention of their endeavours being honoured with the general approbation and encouragement of their Fellow-Citizens. Conscious of the service their example and perseverance in so laudable an undertaking may produce, they are proud to avow the following are the primary objects on which their motives and principles are founded.

First, That as our Constitution was, from the earliest periods, founded on Liberty, it should not be destroyed, as if it were the Government of Despotism.

Secondly, That all our political evils arising from the abuse of THE CONSTITUTION in practice, and not from any defect of it in principle, the original purity of its spirit may be restored without violence to the body.

Thirdly, That as the corrupt State of the Representation originates with all parties, its ancient purity is only to be revived by the unanimous and disinterested efforts of every rank and degree in the kingdom.

Fourthly, That as nothing but a patriotic and disinterested resolution in all, to recur to the first principles of our Constitution, can restore us to the entire possession of our ancient Liberties—it is not the fall of one party, or the rise of another, that should be the object of the public pursuit.

And, Fifthly, That as the Restoration of our

Liberties is equally due to all, no difference of opinion, situation, or circumstance should prevent every individual peaceably uniting in the attainment of this invaluable blessing.

CONDITIONS

For admitting MEMBERS into this SOCIETY.

Agreed, That the following Protest or Declaration shall be complied with, and acknowledged as the real sentiments of each and every Member of this Society, previous to their admission into any of our Meetings, or their acceptance of a ticket.

DECLARATION.

I solemnly declare myself an enemy to all conspiracies, tumults, and riotous proceedings, or maliciously furnishing any attempt that tends to overturn, or any wise injure or disturb the peace of the People, or the Laws of this Realm: And that my only wish and design is, to concur in sentiment with every peaceable and good Citizen of this Nation, in giving my voice for application to be made to Parliament, praying for a speedy Reformation, and an equal Representation in the House of Commons.

December 19, 1791.

APPENDIX

To VOLUME the SECOND;

CONTAINING

- ' A State of the Representation of the People of *England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland*, under the Protector, OLIVER CROMWELL, in the Year 1654.
- A State of the Representation of the People of *England, Wales, and Scotland*, on the PLAN of the ASSOCIATION of the COUNTY of YORK, in the Year 1780.
- A State of the Representation of the People of *England*, on the Principles of Mr. PITT, in the Year 1785; with an annexed State of additional Propositions, suggested by the Editor, in the Year 1793.

*A State of the Representation of the People of
England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, under
the Protector, Oliver Cromwell, in the Year
1654.*

ENGLAND.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | <i>Members for Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--|---------------|
| Bedfordshire, | 5 | 1 | 6 |
| Berkshire, | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Buckinghamshire, | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Cambridgeshire, | 4 } | 2 | 8 |
| Isle of Ely, | 2 } | | |
| Cheshire, | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Cornwall, | 8 | 4 | 12 |
| Cumberland, | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Derbyshire, | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Devonshire, | 11 | 9 | 20 |
| Dorsetshire, | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Durham, | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Essex, | 13 | 3 | 16 |
| Gloucestershire, | 5 | 4 | 9 |
| Hampshire, | 8 } | 4 | 12 |
| Isle of Wight, | 2 } | | |
| Herefordshire, | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Hertfordshire, | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Huntingdonshire, | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Kent, | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| Lancashire, | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Leicestershire, | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Lincolnshire, | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| Middlesex, | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| Monmouthshire, | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Norfolk, | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| Northamptonshire, | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| Northumberland, | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Nottinghamshire, | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Oxfordshire, | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Rutlandshire, | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Shropshire, | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Somersetshire, | 11 | 7 | 18 |
| Staffordshire, | | | |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | <i>Members for Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Total.</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| Staffordshire, | 3 | 3 | 6 |
| Suffolk, | 10 | 6 | 16 |
| Surrey, | 6 | 4 | 10 |
| Sussex, | 9 | 5 | 14 |
| Warwickshire, | 4 | 3 | 7 |
| Westmorland, | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Wiltshire, | 10 | 4 | 14 |
| Worcestershire, | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| Yorkshire West Riding | 6 | 8 | 22 |
| East Riding | 4 | | |
| North Riding, | 4 | | |

WALES.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Anglesea, | 2 | | 2 |
| Brecknockshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Cardiganhire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Caermarthenshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Caernarvonshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Denbighshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Flintshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Glamorganshire, | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Merionethshire, | 1 | | 1 |
| Montgomeryshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| Pembrokehire, | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Radnorshire, | 2 | | 2 |
| | <hr/> 265 | <hr/> 135 | <hr/> 400 |

SCOTLAND.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| Inverness, | 1 | |
| Forfar & Kincardineshire, | 1 | |
| Fife and Kinross, | 1 | |
| Perth, | 1 | |
| Linlithgow, Sterling and Clackmannan, | 1 | |
| | | Dunbarton, |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> |
|--|------------------------|
| Dunbarton, Argyle, and Bute, | 1 |
| Lanerk, | 1 |
| Mid-Lothian, | 1 |
| East Lothian, | 1 |
| Mers, | 1 |
| Selkirk and Peebles, | 1 |
| Dumfries, | 1 |
| Wigtoun, | 1 |
| Orkney, Shetland, and Caithness, | 1 |
| Sutherland Ross, and Cromarty, | 1 |
| Elgin, and Nairn, | 1 |
| Banff, | 1 |
| Aberdeen, | 1 |
| Air, and Renfrew, | 1 |
| Roxburgh, | 1 |
| Total Members for Counties of Scotland, | 20 |

| <i>Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Members for Cities and Towns.</i> |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| Edinburgh, | 2 |
| Forfar, Dundee, Aberbrothock, Montrose, | 1 |
| Brechin, | 1 |
| Linlithgow, Queensferry, Perth, Culrofs, | 1 |
| Stirling, | 1 |
| St. Andrews, Dysart, Kirkcaldy, Cupar, | 1 |
| Anstruther, East and West, Pitten Weem, | 1 |
| Crail, Dunfermline, Kinghorn, Inver- | 1 |
| keithing, Kilrenay, Burnt Island, | 1 |
| Lanerk, Glasgow, Rutherglen, Rothfay, | 1 |
| Renfrew, Air, Irvin, Dunbarton, | 1 |
| Dumfries, Sanguhar, Lockmaben, Aman, | 1 |
| Wigton, Kirkcudbright, Whitehorn, | 1 |
| Galloway, | 1 |
| Peebles, Selkirk, Jedburgh, Lauder, North | 1 |
| Berwick, Dunbar, Haddington, | 1 |
| Dornoch, Tain, Inverness, Dingwall, Nairn, | 1 |
| Elgin, Tones, | 1 |
| Banff, Cullen, Aberdeen, | 1 |
| Total Mem. for Cities & Towns of Scotland, | 10 |
| Total Members for Scotland, | 30 |

IRELAND.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Meath, and Lowth, | 2 | |
| Kildare and Wicklow, | 2 | |
| | | Dublin, |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> |
|--|------------------------|
| Dublin, | 1 |
| Catherlough, Wexford, Kilkenny, and Queen's County, | 2 |
| West Meath, Longford, and King's County, | 2 |
| Down, Antrim, and Armagh, | 2 |
| Derry, Donegal, and Tyrone, | 2 |
| Cavan, Termanagh, and Monaghams, | 1 |
| Kerry, Limerick, and Clare, | 2 |
| Cork, | 1 |
| Tipperary and Waterfend, | 2 |
| Sligo, Roscommar, and Leitrim, | 2 |
| Galway and Mayo, | 2 |
| Total Members for Counties of Ireland, | 23 |

| <i>Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Members for Cities and Towns.</i> |
|--|--|
| Dublin, | 1 |
| Carriekfergus, and Belfast, | 1 |
| Derry, and Coleraine, | 1 |
| Limerick, and Kilmallock, | 1 |
| Cork, and Youghall, | 1 |
| Brandon, and Kinfale, | 1 |
| Waterford, and Clonmell, | 1 |
| Total Members for Cities and Towns Ireland, | 7 |
| Total Members for Ireland | 30 |

RECAPITULATION.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|-----|
| Members for England, | - | - | 377 |
| Wales, | - | - | 23 |
| Scotland, | - | - | 30 |
| Ireland, | - | - | 30 |
| Total Representation of the People of England, } Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, | | | 460 |

N. B. By the Instrument of Government appointing Oliver Cromwell Protector, and fixing, as above, the Representation of Great-Britain and Ireland, it was provided that Jersey and Guernsey also should be represented in Parliament; but it does not appear that any Member was elected to serve for these Islands. By the same Instrument it was appointed that the Right of Suffrage in Counties, and also in Cities and Towns, should be allowed to persons possessing 20*l.* although they should neither be entitled to vote as Freeholders, nor as Freemen, &c.

A State

▲ *State of the Representation of the People of
England, Wales, and Scotland, on the Plan of
the Association of the County of York, in the
Year 1780.*

ENGLAND.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|------------------|--|--|
| Bedfordshire | 1 | 3 |
| Berkshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Buckinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cambridgeshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cheshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Cornwall, | 2 | 4 |
| Cumberland, | 2 | 4 |
| Derbyshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Devonshire, | 4 | 6 |
| Dorsetshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Durham, | 1 | 3 |
| Essex, | 3 | 5 |
| Gloucestershire, | 2 | 4 |
| Hampshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Herefordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Hertfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Huntingdonshire, | | 2 |
| Kent, | 4 | 6 |
| Lancashire, | 4 | 6 |
| Lincolnshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Leicestershire, | 1 | 3 |
| Middlesex, | 4 | 6 |
| Norfolk, | 4 | 6 |
| Monmouthshire, | | 2 |
| Northumberland, | 2 | 4 |
| | | Nottinghamshire, |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Nottinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Northamptonshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Oxfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Rutlandshire, | | 2 |
| Shropshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Somersetshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Staffordshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Suffolk, | 3 | 5 |
| Suffex, | 2 | 4 |
| Surry, | 2 | 4 |
| Warwickshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Westmorland, | | 2 |
| Wiltshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Worcestershire, | 1 | 3 |
| Yorkshire, | 7 | <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">West Riding,</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">4</div> </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">North Riding,</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">3</div> </div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">East Riding,</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;">2</div> </div> </div> |
| Addition to English Counties, | 80 | Total County Members for England, |
| | | 160 |

WALES.

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| Anglesea, | | 1 |
| Brecon, | | 1 |
| Cardiganshire, | | 1 |
| Caermarthenshire, | 1 | 2 |
| Caernarvonshire, | | 1 |
| Denbighshire, | 1 | 2 |
| Flintshire, | | 1 |
| Glamorganshire, | 1 | 2 |
| Merionethshire, | | 1 |
| Montgomeryshire, | 1 | 2 |
| Pembrokehire, | | 1 |
| Radnorshire, | | 1 |
| Addition to Welch Coun. | 4 | Total County Members for Wales, |
| | | 16 |

THE METROPOLIS.

| | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|---|
| Marybone, | - | - | - | 2 |
| Pancras, &c. | - | - | - | 2 |
| Westminster, | - | - | - | 2 |
| Southwark, | - | - | - | 1 |

Addition to the Metropolis,

7
SCOTLAND.

SCOTLAND.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each Coun.</i> |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Caithnessshire, | } | 1 |
| Cromartyshire, | | 1 |
| Kinrosshire, | | 1 |
| Buteshire, | | 1 |
| Clackmannanshire, | | 1 |
| Nairnshire, | | 1 |
| Addition to six Scotch Counties, | 3 | |
| Other Counties, | - | 27 |
| Total County Members for Scotland, | } 33 | |

| <i>Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Members added.</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Edinburgh, | 1 |
| Glasgow, | 2 |
| Aberdeen, | 2 |
| Dundee, | 1 |
| Addition to Scotch Cities & Town, | 6 |

RECAPITULATION.

| | <i>Members.</i> |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Addition to England for Counties, | - 80 |
| To Wales Ditto, | - 4 |
| To the Metropolis, | - 7 |
| To Scotland for Counties, | - 3 |
| For Cities and Towns, | - 6 |
| Total addition, | 100 |

N. B. This Table, so far as it respects England and Wales, was formed from the list of Houses chargeable to the duty on Houses and Windows in England and Wales, which was laid before the House of Commons by the Commissioners of Taxes, in the year 1781.

A
S T A T E
OF THE
REPRESENTATION
OF THE
PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,
ON THE
PRINCIPLES of Mr. PITT in 1785 ;
WITH AN ANNEXED
STATE OF ADDITIONAL PROPOSITIONS,
BY THE
Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,
LATE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION
OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

VOL. II.

P P

A
S T A T E
OF THE
REPRESENTATION, &c.

THE proposal which Mr. Pitt offered to Parliament in the Year 1785, for reforming the Representation of the People of England, was the result of much previous agitation of that subject in General Meetings of the County of York and other considerable Districts; and during that popular discussion the propriety of the measure had appeared evident, from the pernicious consequences of the War with America, which Ministers, trusting to a corrupt Influence in Parliament, had dared to continue, long after the sense of the Public had been most unequivocally declared against it. It may justly appear surprising, therefore, that a proposal, from its intrinsic importance so truly interesting, brought forward under circumstances so decisive of its expediency, by a Minister, who is undoubtedly one of the ablest Men of his age, and who at that moment was the Idol of the Public, should be heard with so little attention, and fall so quickly into oblivion, that the design and drift of his Propositions seem now to require illustration. The truth is perhaps, that the Nation which had been ex-

asperated by the misconduct of former Ministers and the palpable corruption of Parliament, which had felt itself degraded as a great Political Power, and nearly ruined by that Civil War, was eager to enjoy the blessings of Peace, without much adverting to the means of future security. The *New* Ministers were esteemed friendly to the Liberty of the People, and Peace and Economy in the expenditure of Public Money were the professed principles on which their Administration was commenced.—From their virtue and wisdom, it was expected by many, that the evil consequences which unavoidably flow from the corrupt principle of our Government, would be mitigated as much as possible, and the work of Reformation, it was therefore thought might well be postponed to some future season, when the necessity for it would be more urgent. A considerable part of the Nation undoubtedly heard the proposal with aversion ; because it aimed to destroy their ill-acquired and unconstitutional power ; and by them it would be willingly consigned to oblivion as a project which they hoped never to see revived ; by some it was slighted because it came from a Minister whom they disapproved ; by others it was disregarded because they thought it not sufficiently extensive ; and many who approved the general principle, on which it was proposed to reform the Representation ; yet for want of having a statement of the several particular

sicular articles of the Plan, distinctly laid before their eyes, were too indolent to examine it with sufficient attention to obtain any exact comprehension of it.

That a proposal of such great importance to the Peace and Liberty of the Nation, might neither be misunderstood nor thrown aside and forgotten, it was much wished soon after it had been rejected by Parliament, that the Minister himself would produce to the Public, the Heads of the Bill, and a particular statement of the Improvements intended by it. For reasons which may be conceived to have much force at that moment, and to be perfectly consistent with a sincere intention to produce such Papers at some future time, it is probable that the Publication alluded to, was postponed by Mr. Pitt. From him it would have come forth with the greatest propriety, and with the most powerful effect.— But since an authentic Publication, specifying distinctly the particular changes which on the principles of his Plan were intended, or probably would have been effected in the Representation of the People of England, seems not now to be reasonably expected from Mr. Pitt, I trust the task may be undertaken by another person with propriety, and possibly, not without some beneficial effect. It is necessary, however, that the Reader should be apprised, that the following statement of improvements in our Representation on the principles proposed by Mr. Pitt, is not an authentic communication

munication of a Paper drawn by Him, and published either with his consent, or without it; it is only a Statement of changes, which, on those principles, possibly might have taken place, and that Statement has been minutely drawn out, and adapted to the supposed population of the kingdom, merely from the Editor's recollection of those principles, as generally stated in Mr. Pitt's Speech to Parliament, and in the printed Explanation of them, which had been seen and approved by Mr. Pitt, and with his consent submitted by the Editor, to the consideration of a Public Meeting as a faithful summary of the measures intended; and though the Editor will not assert that the distributions of Members to the several Counties here pointed out, are exactly in the same proportion as they would have been proposed by Mr. Pitt, or that on his principles various other distributions may not be pointed out, which may appear better and more convenient; yet the statement here given, having been made from an authentic list of Houses throughout the Kingdom, which was laid before the House of Commons, in the year 1781, he flatters himself it will be found sufficiently accurate to answer the purpose intended; which was to convince the Public from a particular view of the probable operations of the Bill in question, that a Political Reform on those principles would be of infinitely greater value, than the major part of the Community seems
to

to have thought ; and possibly to convince the most ardent Reformers, that although Justice and the more extended expectations of the People may now render some additional improvements expedient, respecting the enlargement of the Right of Suffrage, and the comprehension of the People of Scotland, yet those improvements ought to be such as would accord with the general views of the Plan in question, and indeed would not be deviations from that Plan, but only a more complete application of its principles to the actual circumstances of the case. The particular improvements which the more expanded ideas of the People seem to require, which would be agreeable to the rules of justice, and would accord well with the regulations before proposed, will be annexed to the following

STATE of the REPRESENTATION of the PEOPLE of ENGLAND, as it might have been improved on the principles of Mr. PITT's Plan, in the Year 1785.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|------------------|--|--|
| Bedfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Berkshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Buckinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cambridgeshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cheshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cornwall, | 1 | 3 |
| Cumberland, | 1 | 3 |
| Derbyshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Devonshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Dorsetshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Durham, | 1 | 3 |
| | P p 4 | Essex, |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Essex, | 2 | 4 |
| Gloucestershire, | 2 | 4 |
| Hampshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Herefordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Hertfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Huntingdonshire, | | 2 |
| Kent, | 3 | 5 |
| Lancashire, | 3 | 5 |
| Leicestershire, | 2 | 4 |
| Lincolnshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Middlesex, | 3 | 5 |
| Monmouthshire, | | 2 |
| Norfolk, | 3 | 5 |
| Northumberland, | 2 | 4 |
| Nottinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Northamptonshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Oxfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Rutlandshire, | | 2 |
| Shropshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Somersetshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Staffordshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Suffolk, | 2 | 4 |
| Suffex, | 1 | 3 |
| Surry, | 2 | 4 |
| Warwickshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Westmorland, | | 2 |
| Wiltshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Worcestershire, | 1 | 3 |
| Yorkshire, | 7 | <div> <div>West Riding, 4</div> <div>North Riding, 3</div> <div>East Riding, 2</div> </div> 9 |
| | | |
| | | |
| Total | 67 | 147 |

Members added to the Metropolis.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Marybone, Pancras, &c. | 2 |
| Westminster, | 2 |
| Southwark, | 1 |
| | 5 |

Members granted to four great Unrepresented Towns.

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Birmingham, | 2 |
| Manchester, | 2 |
| Sheffield, | 2 |
| Leeds, | 2 |
| | 8 |

Members

Members to be chosen by Popular Election in Ten Cities and Towns, at present deprived of that Right by their respective Corporations.

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Bath, | 2 |
| Buckingham, | 2 |
| Bury, | 2 |
| Tiverton, | 2 |
| Scarborough, | 2 |
| Portsmouth, | 2 |
| Salisbury, | 2 |
| Winchester, | 2 |
| Dartmouth, | 2 |
| Plymouth, | 2 |
| | <hr/> |
| | 20 |

RECAPITULATION.

| | <i>Members.</i> |
|--|-----------------|
| Total addition to England for Counties, | 67 |
| To the Metropolis, | 5 |
| To great Unrepresented Towns, | 8 |
| Addition by Popular Election in 10 Cities and Towns, at present deprived of that privilege by their respective Corporations, | 20 |
| Total addition to the popular Representation, | 100 |

For which would be wanted the abolition of 40 Rotten Boroughs, &c. to avoid increasing the number of the House of Commons.

To this great advantage, it was proposed to add another of no small importance, by augmenting the Constituents Body, nearly with the addition of 100,000 Voters; to be effected by imparting the right of voting to Copyholders, to certain Unrepresented Freeholders, and also to decent Householders in the Metropolis, and in great unrepresented Towns, and in ten Cities and Towns in which the Right of Election was recorded to be thrown open. If this Plan had been accepted by Parliament, it would have been thought of for gradually weeding out all the little boroughs not containing 400 Households.

State

STATE OF ADDITIONAL PROPOSITIONS Suggested in the Year 1793.

THE most obvious and necessary addition to Mr. Pitt's Plan is, that it should be extended to the Representation of the People of Scotland; in such a manner, as to remove that degrading exception by which six of the Counties of Scotland are reduced to alternate Representation; to place Edinburgh and some other principal Cities, in respect of their representative importance on a footing of equality with the great Towns of England; and to regulate Elections in Scotland by the same general rules to which they are subject in England.

Another necessary addition to that Plan seems to be, the extension of the Right of Suffrage to all decent Householders throughout Great-Britain.

By these regulations the following COUNTIES of SCOTLAND would receive an addition of THREE MEMBERS; so that each of those Counties would be constantly represented by ONE MEMBER.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | <i>Addition.</i> | <i>Number of County Mem. in Scotland.</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------|---|
| Caithnessshire, | 1 | 3 | |
| Cromartyshire, | 1 | | |
| Kinrosshire, | 1 | | |
| Buteshire, | 1 | | |
| Clackmannanshire, | 1 | | |
| Nairnshire | 1 | | |
| Other Counties | 27 | | |

The following CITIES and TOWNS of SCOTLAND would receive an addition of SEVEN MEMBERS, viz.

| <i>Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Members added to Cities & Towns.</i> | <i>Total addition.</i> | <i>Num. of Mem. for Cities & Towns in Scotland.</i> |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Edinburgh, | 1 | } 7 | |
| Glasgow, | 2 | | |
| Aberdeen, | 2 | | |
| Dundee, | 1 | | |
| Paisley,* | 1 | | |
| Present number of Members for Cities and Towns, | } 15 | | 22 |
| Total Representation of Scotland, | | | 35 |

The Elections which at present are confined to a few Members of a Corporation in each of the following Towns of England, by these regulations would become Popular Elections, viz.

| | <i>Addition of Constitutional Members by Popular Elections in four Towns of England.</i> |
|--------------|--|
| Marlborough, | } 8 |
| Launceston, | |
| Poole, | |
| Thetford, | |

By these regulations, also, the Body of Constituents in England, on any reasonable definition of the Persons meant by "decent Householders" would receive an addition probably, not short of 150,000 Voters. The same regulations adding to the present Electors in Scotland, Freeholders and Copyholders of 40 shillings value, and decent Householders would probably increase the Constituent Body there by an augmentation of nearly 100,000 Voters. The total augmentation of the Elective Body by these regulations throughout Great-Britain, would be nearly 250,000 Additional Voters.

* It might not be improper, perhaps, to annex to Paisley some of the small Unrepresented burghs in its neighbourhood, to take a part in Election for Representatives of that Town. The small share of the Representation at present enjoyed by Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, would devolve upon the other Burghs with which they are connected and increase their share,

JOINT

JOINT RECAPITULATION.

By Mr. PITT's PLAN enlarged in the manner here stated.

The Constituent Body throughout England, by imparting the Right of Voting to Copyholders, to certain unrepresented Freeholders, and to decent Householders in the district of Marybone, in four great unrepresented Towns, and in ten Cities and Towns in which the Right of Voting would be thrown open would be increased by the addition of —

Voters.

100,000

The Constituent Body throughout Great-Britain, by imparting the Right of Voting to those decent Householders and other Persons to whom Mr. Pitt's Plan originally did not propose to extend it, would be increased by the addition of —

250,000

The total addition to the Constituent Body of Great-Britain would be —

350,000

County Members.

The Representation of the Counties of England would be increased to —
That of Wales would remain —
That of Scotland would be increased to —
Total County Representation of Great-Britain would be —

147

12

33

192

The Representation of the Cities and Towns of England would be diminished by the abolition of forty of the most obnoxious Boroughs by voluntary surrender; but that of the Towns in Wales would remain the same; and the right of being represented by eight Members would be granted to four Unrepresented Towns; and the right of being represented by five Members would be granted to certain Districts of the Metropolis of England: the Representation of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales would therefore be —

Members for Cities and Towns of England.

354

That of the Cities and Towns of Scotland would be increased to —
The total Representation of the Cities and Towns of Great-Britain would be —

22

376

The

*Members for Great
Britain.*

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| the total Representation of the Coun- ties, Cities, and Towns of Great- Britain, by adding ten Members to Scotland would be | } | 558 |
|--|---|-----|

Or, if diminishing the relative proportion of the English Representation to that of Scotland, should be thought less objectionable than adding to the present number of the House of Commons, the inconvenience might be avoided by the farther abolition of five obnoxious Boroughs, by voluntary surrender, to be obtained by purchase, as was proposed by Mr. Pitt.

To secure the execution of this enlarged Plan, it is proposed that the regulation for granting ten Members to the District of Marybone and Pancras, to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, and also three to the six Counties of Scotland which are under alternate Representation, and seven to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Paisley, should take place at the next General Election: and that a list of all the Counties of England, reckoning each of the Ridings of Yorkshire as a County, should be formed by lot, and when any Borough should have surrendered its Franchise in the manner already stated, the share of Representation so surrendered should be transferred to the County or Riding, the name of which may stand first upon the list so formed and so to the next upon the list progressively till

till the whole transfers designed for the Counties may have been made. The City of Westminster and the Borough of Southwark, might either be classed in this list in the same manner as the Counties, or might be placed at the end of it, as the last District to which the intended Transfer should be made: and still more to promote the speedy execution of this Plan, it seems expedient that 100,000*l.* be added to the sum of one million, proposed to be set apart for the purchase of obnoxious Boroughs, in order, that out of the said 100,000*l.* ten sums of ten thousand pounds each may be added to ten sums of twenty thousand pound each, as was originally proposed for the said purchase; and the united sums, with their accumulations of interest, respectively may be paid to the first ten Boroughs which shall surrender their obnoxious Franchises. In pursuance of these ideas, it is to be understood, that no Transfer of the privilege of Representation would be wanted, on account of the ten Members proposed to be added to the Counties, Cities, and Towns of Scotland; that from the five Boroughs which should first have surrendered that privilege, a transfer of their share in the Representation would be esteemed to have been made in advance, to the unrepresented district of Marybone, &c. and to the great Unrepresented Towns of Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds; and that the shares in the Representation of thirty-five Bo-
roughs

roughs remaining to be disfranchised as aforesaid, would be directed by Parliament to be transferred to the several Counties or Ridings of England, to the City of Westminster, and to the Borough of Southwark, in the order in which their names might stand in a list formed in the manner prescribed, till the whole transfers intended had been completely made: and it would be necessary that certain Persons, being partly Members of the House of Commons, and partly private individuals, should be appointed with authority to act in this case, as Commissioners or Trustees for the Public; that the sums of money wanted for the several purchases which have been proposed, with the growing interest of the same, should be vested in them, and that they should have full power to treat with all Persons interested in any Borough or Boroughs not containing 400 houses, and also with the Corporations of the several Cities and Towns in England and Scotland, whose present monopoly of the Right of Representation is proposed to be abolished by consent, to agree with them, or the majority of them, upon terms for the purchase of the surrender of their privilege of Representation, and finally to complete the said purchase: the completion of which purchase the Commissioners aforesaid should be required within a certain short time to be limited by Parliament, to notify

tify to the House of Commons ; under whose direction the Speaker of the House should be required to give notice of the same in the Gazette, and also to name the County, City or Town, to which the then purchased share of Representation was to be transferred, to which notice and nomination the returning officer of the County, City, or Town so intitled to a share of the Representation which had been purchased, should be bound to pay due attention, and to proceed to Election in such manner as the Law might in this case direct. By these provisions, this enlarged Plan of improvements would be carried into immediate effect, respecting those great Unrepresented Towns and Districts of the Metropolis, whose total privation of the fundamental right of Representation must be considered as the most oppressive grievance ; and also respecting those six Counties of Scotland which are subject to alternate Representation, and those great Cities and Towns of Scotland, whose share of Representation respectively is but an unit or the fraction of an unit, not enjoyed by the inhabitants at large, but monopolized by a few Corporators, who bear an almost imperceptible proportion to the rest. By the same means also, the Plan would be carried into speedy, if not immediate effect, respecting the abolition of the first five obnoxious Boroughs, whose Right of Representation

tation would be transferred to five unrepresented Places, and, also, respecting the abolition of five other obnoxious Boroughs, whose Right of Representation would be transferred to several of the Counties of England. And when the Plan had been thus far carried into execution, by the said addition of Members to the above-mentioned Counties, Cities, and Towns of Scotland, and by the transfer of the Right of Representation from ten obnoxious Boroughs, to the district of Marybone, the four great Unrepresented Towns of Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds, and an adequate number of English Counties, the complete and speedy accomplishment of the whole Plan, would be indisputably secured.

STATE OF MONEY

Wanted for the PURCHASES proposed.

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| For purchasing the surrender of their Right of Representation from 40 Boroughs of England, and the surrender of their injurious monopoly of that Right from ten Corporate Bodies of England, it was proposed by Mr. Pitt to set apart the sum of— | } | 1,000,000 |
|---|---|-----------|

| | | |
|--|---|--------|
| For purchasing the surrender of that injurious monopoly from four more Corporate Bodies of England, it might be proper now to set apart the additional sum of— | } | 50,000 |
|--|---|--------|

For

| | | |
|--|---|---------|
| For purchasing the surrender of that injurious monopoly from the Corporations of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, and the other Parliamentary Burghs of Scotland— | } | 120,000 |
|--|---|---------|

| | | |
|---|---|---------|
| For securing the speedy execution of the Plan in the manner proposed— | } | 100,000 |
|---|---|---------|

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| So upon this Statement, the whole sum wanted would be no more than— | } | 1,300,000 |
|---|---|-----------|

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| But if five more English Boroughs should be abolished in the same way, viz. by purchase, to prevent an increase in the number of the House of Commons, the whole sum wanted in that case for the fullest execution of this great systematical improvement of our National Representation, in all its parts would not exceed— | } | 1,400,000 |
|--|---|-----------|

N. B. But this is not to be considered as the measure recommended, because by increasing difficulties in the execution, it might render the whole attempt abortive.

When this system had been fully carried into execution, a sum not exceeding 100,000*l.* would be sufficient to be set apart gradually to weed out the remaining small and obnoxious Boroughs, by obtaining a voluntary surrender of their injurious Franchises, in the mode which has been before stated; in order that their share of the Representation might be transferred from Boroughs which were depopulated to such great Unrepresented Towns, as might have arisen in the kingdom.

By these safe and peaceful means, the Representation of the People, having received this great systematical improvement, would approach as nearly to theoretical perfection, as
the

the actual circumstances seem to allow, and thus might be prevented the relapse of the Constitution into that degraded state in which it now is; and from which the assailant of the popular part of it almost appears to derive some plausible pretext for his insulting denial,* that the House of Commons ever was, or ought to be considered as a Representation of the Commons: And consistently with this doctrine, the consequence which unavoidably flows from the loss or diminution of our Representative Rights, viz. a Senate NOT SPEAKING THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, or in other words, a Government NOT BY CONSENT, is commended by this Deserter from the Cause of Liberty, as a fit Government for the British Nation; and the wealth to which the Nation has attained is absurdly imputed to the abuses and usurpations complained of, instead of being ascribed, as it ought to have been, to that degree of rational Liberty, which is still enjoyed under our impaired Constitution, and to the industry and patience of a well-deserving People, whom those abuses and usurpations have hitherto, neither discouraged, nor provoked beyond the bounds of moderation. Never did the ears of our Ancestors tingle at hearing doctrines maintained more directly destructive of their most valuable

* See the 3d Edition of Mr. Young's pamphlet, "The Example of France a Warning to Britain."

Rights. That such doctrines have been avowed in the face of the Public, were alone an alarming indication of the temper and disposition of the times. But when publications containing positions thus hostile to the Constitution, have been approved by numerous Associations, and circulated under the recommendation of the first legal Officers of the Crown, the time is surely come, when the Friends of the Constitution *in all its parts*, should add to their moderation activity and zeal to defend it, and should unite by every warrantable mean at once to support our limited Monarchy against its Republican Foes, and to maintain and secure that fundamental Right of Election, which is the Corner-Stone of our Political Edifice.

The effect of such a Reform of the Representation as has been here recommended would be powerful indeed; it cannot however be thought sufficiently efficacious if unaccompanied with other subsidiary measures, to restore our legislature to the purity of its ancient State.

The farther measures which the Popular Meetings in 1780 deemed necessary for the completion of this purpose are,

The reduction of the enormous Influence of the Crown :

The repeal of the Septennial Bill ;

And Regulations for preventing inconvenience and delay, tumult and expence at Elections.

Without

Without these subsidiary measures, the Members returned to Parliament might be Men of respectable character as private Individuals; they might be chosen by truly respectable communities; not one depopulated or dependent Borough might remain intitled to elect Representatives, and yet, Parliament might be found utterly unable to perform its Constitutional Office to controul the Executive Power, and protect the rights and property of its Constituents.

For till Registers * of Voters have been established, and places of polling in small districts, in hundreds, or in parishes have been appointed, the exercise of the Right of Suffrage will continue too troublesome to the Voter, too expensive to the Candidate. In the counties, therefore, † Elections will seldom be contested; compromise will usually supersede the choice of the People; and thus, under the enormous expences permitted by the Law, even those sound parts of the Representation, though reinforced

* A Bill for keeping an accurate Register of Voters in the Counties, drawn some years ago by Earl Stanhope, by his strenuous exertions, and those of other virtuous Friends of Liberty, was carried through the two Houses of Parliament and passed into a Law. But in the very next Session, before the effect of it could be tried, this salutary act on slight pretences, was repealed. It was afterwards proposed to form a Register of Voters on the same principle as that, on which a list of Jurors at present is formed, but without success.

† The Freeholders of Yorkshire have not been polled for near 60 years. When Sir George Savile canvassed them in 1780, he found several, who never having been called to exercise their Elective Franchise, did not know they had a right to vote for more than one Candidate.

by additional Members, will remain in a great measure disabled to perform their Constitutional Functions. Till these and other Regulations of a similar tendency have been established, inconvenience and delay, disorder and tumult, will also continue to interrupt and disgrace the Poll. And till Laws wisely severe have restored integrity to our Elections, Candidates will be tempted to secure success by arts unknown in the purer ages of the Constitution, and not to be checked by Statutes, the sanctions of which are too feeble to deter offenders, and unwisely pointed less against the Candidates, the rich criminals who offer the bribe, than against the poor Voters by whom it may be accepted; but it is much to be feared, that when fraud and corruption have opened to such Candidates the door of Parliament, they may enter with them, and there contaminate their whole Political Conduct. Other Members may have scorned to stoop to the arts alluded to; and may have engaged in the Parliamentary Duty from motives of public spirit; and a laudable ambition to serve their Country; but while the habits of corruption are yet unchecked, candour cannot suppose such men to form a majority of the senate, nor would prudence wish to expose their virtue to the long trial of a Septennial Parliament, to the varied arts of Ministers, and their multitudinous means of seduction.

To reduce this immense fund of corruption within narrower bounds, much was well done
in

in the short Administration of Lord Rockingham, and the first years of the present Ministers official power were honourably marked by measures of the same laudable tendency. But much also was then left undone; since that time new taxes have unavoidably increased the means of influence, and in the course of a long administration many fresh abuses with great probability may be supposed to have arisen.

For a virtuous opposition to the evil principle of our Government cannot be lasting, or finally successful when supported merely by the force of popular opinion alone, without a radical reform of those abuses which respect the frame of Parliament itself. In the present State of our Government, the most upright Minister at his entrance into office, will have the mortification to find he cannot govern on the principles of his own integrity; he must swerve from them or resign his power; but power will be retained; the best official regulations will therefore be evaded; new means of influence will be obtained and employed; the completion of his Administration will be gradually affected by the prevailing colour of the system with which he is connected; and at last, his conduct and character will be thoroughly tinged with a fallow and distempered hue, the symptom of that putridity which has so often rendered his predecessors the objects of disgust. But when that radical Reform has been accomplished, economical regulations will be found to co-operate with powerful effect. Official Reforms will

then tend still more to purify our Elections, and to preserve a fairly elected Senate from the baneful influence of corruption.

A shorter duration of Parliament also will then have the happiest consequences ; the Repeal of the Septennial Bill, will then with the greatest advantage to the Public complete the system of Political Renovation, and secure to the People the just and rational exercise of their Parliamentary Controul. At present they look back with envy and regret to those Primitive ages of the Constitution, when nominal and fraudulent votes were unknown, when their forefathers were unpolluted by the base arts of modern Elections; when the fountain of legislation was pure from the taint of corruption, and Parliaments, were venerated and beloved, as the firm and incorruptible Guardians of the People. By reverting to the genuine principles of the Constitution, and making this temperate application of them to the exigencies of these times, the seeds of discontent, and disaffection may be stilled, the growth of a Republican party may be stopt, and if not delayed too long, the Melioration of the Constitution, in this moderate and peaceful way, may happily be found to be the consummation of the popular wish.

Against the Plan of Mr. Pitt thus enlarged it may be foreseen that various objections will be urged; some of which will undoubtedly deserve serious consideration. But should the pensioned Advocate of the present system of
abuses

abuses contend, that the discontents of the People are groundless and unreasonable, that a Parliament over which they have little regular influence, which has been named chiefly by the Crown and the Aristocracy, is best calculated to obtain the great purpose of the Constitution, viz. the Happiness of the People; and therefore, that no Reformation is necessary or ought to be conceded; the Reader's patience shall not be wearied here by an attempt to refute palpable absurdities. Or should the more cautious Foe to Liberty admit that Reformation is expedient, yet insist on the inexpediency of the time, the fallacy of that poor evasion, that frivolous but everlasting excuse, is too apparent to require detection. Or should the uncandid Adversary shift his ground, and change the direction of his attack from the plan proposed to the Person who proposed it, should he charge the Author of this Paper with the mean design to disparage Mr. Pitt and his Plan, or the malignant purpose to irritate popular discontent, and to excite commotion by suggesting more extensive propositions of Reform, than those he formerly recommended; little previous remark surely can be necessary to obviate the impression of those expected illiberalities.* The Plan of Mr. Pitt, if examined by

* The extreme injustice of Satire sometimes defeats the malevolent purpose of it; and the most atrocious is not always the most mischievous calumniator. The coarsely-coloured picture which is the 3d edition of Mr. Young's late pamphlet, intitled, 'The Example of

by theoretical rules, will certainly be found to fall far short of perfection; it did not even aim to remove some of the grossest abuses which disgrace the British Representation; but it was a wise proposal and well adapted to the State of Public Opinion in 1785; the guarded moderation of it evinced his sincerity at that time; and if more extensive changes had been proposed, they would have been unauthorized by the previously declared wish of any considerable portion of the community. But since that time, the denial of redress, and a long protracted discussion have produced their usual effects; upon the subject of Constitutional Rights, the ideas of the Public have been expanded, and a more extensive redress is sought in many parts of England, and throughout Scotland, than Mr. Pitt's original Plan proposed

- of France a Warning to Britain) has been held out to the Public, as the Portrait of the Author of this Paper, he is satisfied, bears no just resemblance to his real character; he hears the most criminal intentions there imputed to him, and his Political Principles in his Accuser's judgment, identified with those of the wildest Incendiary of France, viz. MARAT, and he hears it with unaltered serenity of mind; because his conscience tells him IT IS NOT TRUE. He fears not the effect of what has been so vehemently urged against him in the Pamphlet in question, whether in the shape of incoherent reasoning, of mutilated quotation, or epithets of virulent abuse. His correspondence, and his other Political Papers will soon be laid before the Public, and will present a view of his conduct during several years in promoting a Reformation of Parliament, and hence on surer grounds, than the fierce invectives of his antagonist, the question may receive a clear decision, whether he has not acted uniformly as became a good Citizen, a Friend to the Peace, and to the Liberty of his Country.

to have given. The discontent of the People under their Constitutional Grievances, is the result of their enlarged knowledge of their Rights, and of the usurpations of Ministers and Peers; much has been well written, much has been eloquently spoken to demonstrate the injuries the Constitution has suffered; the fatal consequences which experience proves to flow from that source, and the necessity for some better security for the Liberty of the People, have been insisted on with equal energy by the wisest Ministers and the most unblemished Patriots.—It is needless to inquire therefore, whether the discontent of the People be owing more to the Parliamentary Speeches of a Pitt and a Savile, or to the Political Writings of a Burgh and a Price; to the late Revolution in America; or to the more recent Revolution in France. It is evident, that discontent exists, and that it will be our true wisdom to allay that discontent by timely accommodation.

The original Plan of Mr. Pitt was excellently contrived to effect a temperate Reform in the most amicable manner, with the consent even of the Boroughs whose abolition was required; and in it also Principles respecting the Right of Suffrage were laid down, the extension of which, from a few districts to the kingdom at large, might well content the People, even in this more advanced state of their ideas and expectations; provided justice were
done

done to our Northern Brethren, by extending a equitable relief to Scotland. It is neither wished therefore to depreciate Mr. Pitt's Plan, nor in any material instance to deviate from it; additions to it are proposed with a view more effectually to recommend the prudent and conciliatory principles of that Plan, to supersede all hazardous propositions of Reform, and to induce the generality of the People, to acquiesce in a System thus enlarged; which is neither violent in its mode of operation, nor extreme in any of its principles, which would obtain the necessary disfranchisements by consent, which would extend the Right of Suffrage to Men of some competent personal estate, whose share in the Representation would give fresh security to property; and which would finally remove all the great evils complained of in the State of our Representation, in England and in Scotland.

But any alteration in the proportion of Representatives established by the Act of Union between England and Scotland, it may be thought would be a breach of that Union: and certainly this objection if well founded, would be an insuperable difficulty. But what expounder of laws or of treaties will maintain, that a change beneficial to each of the contracting parties, and desired by both would be an infringement of the contract? The population of Scotland equals at least a fourth part of the population
of

of England, their Representation falls below the proportion of one to eleven. Scotland, therefore, collectively taken, is inadequately represented in the British Parliament; and the counties and populous cities in question, have still greater reason to complain of their very imperfect share of Constitutional Importance. The addition of ten Members to these counties and cities would be a benefit to them, and to Scotland in general, too evident to be insisted on. And whenever the People of England and their Representatives shall deem it a benefit to England to restore equitable Representation in that larger part of the Kingdom, they will undoubtedly deem it advantageous even to themselves, that abuses should not be suffered to remain in Scotland, to nourish discontent there, and to disgrace the work of Reformation here. At the time when the Act of Union was completed, to the lasting advantage of both Countries, the inadequacy of the portion of Representation allowed to Scotland was less, than it now is; the subsequent increase of population has rendered the grievance greater, it is now much more sensibly felt, and much more generally complained of, than it was at the time of the Union. It might be difficult then to avoid those disgraceful defects of counties alternately unrepresented, and great cities enjoying but the fraction of a vote, for the nomination of a single Member; but when England shall undertake

undertake a great systematical improvement of her own Representation, her conduct will be neither generous nor prudent, if she leave foul abuses in that of Scotland, as nuisances to taint the purity of the whole.

* The seeming Lover of Democracy, but in truth, under that appearance, the real Friend of Aristocracy with all its usurpations, may object to this enlarged Plan, as he before objected, to the narrower Plan of Mr. Pitt, that it is too favourable to Aristocratical Power. Even when applied to that narrower Plan, the objection is hardly reconcileable with sincerity on the one hand, or with common sense on the other. For what Man of common sense and experience, who is not warped by partiality from truth and candour, will assert, that the abolition of dependent boroughs would be no diminution of Aristocratical Power; or that the right of Election thrown open to the substantial householders in towns now subject to the monopoly of a corporation, would be no advantage to the People; or that the County Representation is not more free than that of the boroughs from the undue influence of the Peerage? The plan in question, without touching the just constitutional Power of the Crown and the Peers, would have corrected many of those abuses from which the new and dangerous influence of both

* See the Pamphlet of Mr. A. Dalrymple, entitled "Parliamentary Reform, as it is called, improper in the present State of this Country,"

has derived its existence; their adherents saw it distinctly, they united to oppose the proposition, and by their union it was defeated. But the objection, applied to the more extensive plan, would be still more manifestly futile and absurd. For let it be supposed that the various changes and regulations here proposed had been established; and that a Parliament had been chosen under the influence of those principles; and then let the Objector compare a Parliament so chosen with the Parliaments we have seen. It will be impossible that he should not perceive, that instead of an assembly dependent on the Government, and a few Noble Families, we should have a fair House of Commons, the great majority of whom had been elected by the decent householders, and persons of landed property in the counties and great towns of the Kingdom, such Members would feel their responsibility to their Constituents; and they would act with a due regard to their sentiments and interest in preference to their own private emolument; conscious that the trust reposed in them would soon revert to Men, whose confidence must be preserved or their delegation lost. And by these means operating throughout our improved system of Representation, private emolument and local interests would be overcome by the general interest of the Public, which is but the aggregate of the personal interests of the majority, in the different subdivisions of the community.

This

This objection, therefore, in the sense in which it has been combated, appears to be weak and ridiculous. But in fact it may have been the Objector's meaning only, if his meaning be collected from the single passage in question, that Mr. Pitt's Plan in 1785, would not have restored the Rights of the People so fully as they ought to be restored, and he may now admit, that in the present state of the public opinion a more extensive, but equally safe plan for the restoration of popular rights ought to be proposed. If these can be the sentiments of the Objector alluded to, he is agreed with the Author of this Piece, and the improvements here connected with Mr. Pitt's plan, may possibly meet his approbation.

There is yet another sense in which his objection may be understood, or an opinion to which it may afford some countenance, though not intended or perhaps perceived by the Objector himself; and it is too dangerous not to require some notice and brief refutation: viz. that in the event of a Reformation of Parliament, the Public ought to expect every sort and degree of Aristocratical Power to be beat down and entirely demolished. To destroy the usurped Power of Ministers and Nobles in the Boroughs, &c. is a just and a Constitutional, a safe and a practicable measure. But wholly to destroy the power of Men of great landed estates, or of great mercantile opulence were an attempt big with danger, and impossible

ble to be effected without flagrant injustice, and the ruin of the Constitution. Opulence ever must confer influence, and even command in a certain degree; all that can be justly or safely done for the reduction of aristocratical influence must still be supposed to have left what may be called **THE NATURAL WEIGHT OF PROPERTY.**

In the course of the last Century the aristocracy have gained a great accession of artificial power, by their various fraudulent encroachments and usurpations in the Boroughs; while in the same period the Democracy of Great-Britain has acquired much additional weight of property, and from the great diffusion of knowledge also is justly intitled to an augmentation of Political Importance. From these circumstances and from the progressive increase of Taxes, and the growing necessities of the State, it is easy to foresee that the People will not long endure the gross usurpations so justly complained of. If all redress were perseveringly refused by the Great, this were a conduct calculated to provoke Commotion with a train of terrible calamities. If nothing short of personal Representation would content the People, this were to provoke a refusal, and to lose the substance of Liberty in pursuit of the shadow of theoretical perfection; and even that shadow would be found to elude the grasp: Aristocratical superiority would still remain attached to superior opulence; it could only be

destroyed

VOL. II. **R r**

destroyed by means absolutely inconsistent with justice and the Rights of Property. Society was formed to protect Men in the enjoyment of their personal Rights ; Society was also formed to protect Men in the enjoyment of their property. Each of these distinct and important ends of Government ought to be duly attended to ; for want of that attention, sometimes the Right of Property has been unjustly invaded, on pretences more or less specious, for an Agrarian Law, and an equal distribution of property, but much more frequently have the personal liberties of mankind been destroyed, from their excessive solicitude for the preservation of property, and their indifference, or insufficient care for their personal rights. Simplicity of manners, a nearly equal division of property, the non-existence of a great and profligate Capital, and other favourable circumstances, many of which appear to be combined in the situation of America, may render it not extremely difficult to form a Government perfectly agreeable to the principles of Liberty, and yet perfectly friendly to the Rights of Property. If this has not been done by the American People, their reasons for stopping short of speculative perfection, it may be justly presumed, were prudent and practically right. At least it may be safely asserted, that to attempt to form a Government on a perfect theory, where almost all the existing circumstances

stances are hostile to the attempt, were the extreme of mischievous folly. To force circumstances to bend to theory, has been the fatal resolution of the French People. And before their new Republic can be established on any stable foundation, great must be the calamities endured in France, and violent must be the change in the distribution of their property, and the consequent change of National Manners. For their sakes, and for the sake of the General Liberty of Mankind, their desperate rashness is deeply to be lamented; and surely the interference of neighbouring powers, ostensibly to restore order and tranquillity among them, intentionally to restore their ancient despotism, and to dismember France, is not less deeply to be execrated: they have exasperated Men, cruel before, to tenfold cruelty; they are sharers in the guilt of those Men, and a great part of the crimes and miseries of the French Nation may justly be charged to their hostile confederacy.*

Far be it from the British People to follow this fatal example; far be it from them to hazard the miseries of a great Revolution in pursuit of that Republican Equality, to which their unequally divided property, their licentious populace, their luxurious capital, their widely extended empire, are all circumstances most decidedly unsuitable. The attempt in the last century to establish a Republic in this Coun-

* Viz. The Treaty of Pilnitz.

try, after having been the cause of much bloodshed, and many miseries, was finally unsuccessful: and should the similar enterprize in France prove more successful, their Republican Equality will be dearly purchased indeed. On the one hand, therefore, prudence pondering the defeat of that enterprize in England, and the miseries of the second Revolution of France dissuades us from the adoption of Republican Principles; on the other hand, honour, public spirit, and a sense of national injury, forbid us to crouch in abject acquiescence under the recent usurpations of the Great. . The middle course of temperate Reformation, is that which benevolence and a just patriotic zeal will most approve, as the means to avoid hazard from the growth of Revolutionary Principles, and to carry the freedom and happiness of the community to the highest pitch, which in the present circumstances seems to be attainable. That they who possess the power may also have the wisdom to redress the grievances complained of, on moderate principles, and in a seasonable time, is greatly to be wished, and surely not altogether to be despaired. For it must be apparent to them, that the discontents of the People have been recently increased in a great degree, and it must be felt, that Parliament has lost the ancient confidence of the Nation, which must be regained by proper Reform, or there can be no safety for Government.—For every State is
liable

liable to the calamitous vicissitudes of fortune ; and hence are usually excited popular discontent ; commotion, and revolution ; but that Government is more peculiarly exposed to danger from stormy commotions of the People, on any calamitous event, which rests the foundation of its power, not on the basis of an equitable Constitution, and the unbought affection of the People, but on force, or fraud, on the dexterous application of the means of influence, and the skilful management of a venal or factious Senate. In a Country so governed, it is not the fleeting popularity of a Minister, nor even the personal worth of the Monarch himself, which, in times of great National Distress, can give stability to the Throne. The exile of Necker, and the fate of Louis unjustly bleeding on the Scaffold, are standing lessons to statesmen, that virtues and talents are unable to protect either the Minister or the Monarch, when the sense of oppression is become general and intolerable. But if it be neither wise nor safe for the Great, to persevere in the support of a fraudulent system of Representation, particularly when by their instigation, chiefly the Nation has been involved in a most ruinous and unnecessary War ; on the other hand, let not the People and their active agents imagine that in exceeding the bounds of moderation, either in their measures or the means adopted for their support, there will be no imprudence, no

hazard to the cause of Public Liberty. Let them not forget, that by temperate conduct much was gained by preceding associations, and much more probably might have been added to the stock of Public Liberty, not if more extensive measures of Reformation had been proposed to Parliament in 1785, but if the temperate plan then proposed had been more vigorously supported by the People. A great constitutional weight has been fraudulently taken from the scale of the People; to replace that weight, was then the laudable attempt of Yorkshire, and other populous districts; but their united strength was found unable to move it. A greater portion of the People may now be combined to co-operate for the same purpose, and their lost Constitutional weight may be thus restored with ease to the popular scale. But if the weight to be moved should be increased in proportion to the power applied to move it, it is evident, that the utmost efforts of the People will again terminate in disappointment. Or, to drop the metaphor, and express what is meant more plainly and more completely; if the Friends of Reformation should be persuaded to demand redress on the principles of universal suffrage; their demand will be rejected, to that rejection they must submit, or engage in a doubtful struggle, in which no success could compensate the calamities of the Public. But if following safer counsels,

counsels, they should unite in desiring a moderate Reformation, and express their firm resolution to acquiesce in that concession, should it be granted to their request by Parliament, so just, so reasonable a proposal, supported as it probably would be, by the voice of the Nation, could not long be resisted.

The too eager advocates for Democratic Power, may consider these cautious measures as the effect of timidity, and a Reformation proposed on less extensive principles than theirs, may appear to them little better than the paltry expedient of a day. They may reject the suggestions of moderation with disdain; and treat the proposers of such limited schemes of Reformation, as strangers to political science, as petty Aristocrats, who wish to form or increase in the Counties a little Aristocracy of their own class and size; as Men, whose feeble powers cannot comprehend the extent and grandeur of their magnificent systems; and the success of whose exertions would but retard the introduction of that perfect Form of Government which their labours directly tend to establish. * But respectable as these persons may be for their talents or their integrity, yet their censure will not be very discouraging, on the contrary, it will be considered by the Friends of temperate Reformation, as indirectly attesting

* See the Political Writings of Mr. David Williams and Thomas Cooper, Esq.

their solicitude to preserve Public Order and Tranquillity, as implying a part of that praise which it is their utmost wish to deserve. For respecting this earth and all its sublunary business, what nobler ambition can there be than at once to advance the cause of rational Liberty, and to preserve the Peace and Tranquillity of our Country?

There was a time when the right of Personal Representation was supported by a Noble Duke,* with uncommon force; when he courageously proposed to the Legislature to dissolve the whole Frame of our Representation, to re-construct it on that principle, and to give the right to nominate a House of Commons to a fanatical rabble, who were at that very moment besieging the doors of Parliament, and filling the kingdom with general consternation. And when other less intrepid Reformers, from an anxious solicitude to effect a substantial Reformation of Parliament, without hazard to the Peace of the Country, proposed to reinforce the County-Representation, and after that, to purchase the abolition of the obnoxious Boroughs, these variations of their plan were then opposed by this great Theorist as temporizing schemes, grounded on no stable principle, and shifting as *this Man's whim, or as that Mans' caprice* might direct. Such was then the lan-

* The Duke of Richmond.

guage of this Noble Reformer, and such his lofty superiority to the low considerations of prudence, and the preservation of the Public Tranquillity. Virtuous Politician! Consistent Defender of the Rights of Mankind! And yet it is possible, that more mature consideration may have softened the rigour of this stern Advocate for the indefeasible Right of Suffrage, and other times presenting different views of policy, may have lured Him to sloop from the sublimity of his aerial speculation to the more convenient system of practical accommodation.

But though on the present occasion, the Proposer of this Plan sees little reason to fear any severities of animadversion from the zeal of this great theoretical Reformer, yet other Theorists will be found more constant to support the universal system; these deviations from it will call forth their opposition, and the embarrassing questions, as they will deem them, will undoubtedly be asked, on what principle is this plan of Reformation formed and offered to the Public? And in what mode can it be clearly and safely ascertained, who shall be deemed decent householders throughout the kingdom? To the first of these inquiries, let it be answered, the Plan is formed and offered on the principles of Peace, Conciliation, and a more complete security to the Liberties of the Nation. It is admitted, it is maintained, that no Government can be perfectly agreeable to the rules of theory, under which

ver again be acted in Europe; the example of Britain, preferring peaceful melioration to the violence of rapid Revolution, might teach the numerous nations of the Continent, neither madly to unloose the bands of human society, nor yet, with equal insanity, as the Advocates of Slavery would advise, to perpetuate the tyranny of their Despotic Governments, by reverting to the intolerance of the Inquisition, and the extremities of Feudal Oppression; but rather to endeavour to advance from one degree of moral and political improvement to a yet higher degree; till ultimately, the establishment of perfect Liberty would be found compatible with peace and order, consistent with the secure enjoyment of property, and productive of the truest happiness, the highest moral dignity of mankind. But in the present situation of the Country, it is perfectly justifiable to waive insisting on a personal Representation, and to endeavour to unite the great Body of the People, in a vigorous pursuit of moderate measures of Reform, which are attainable without hazarding by a breach of public tranquillity, either the overthrow of our limited Monarchy, or the loss of those Popular Rights which remain unimpaired; and happy would it be, if thus the Nation could be induced, instead of forcing the unfavourable circumstances of our condition to yield to the rigour of speculation, to take the far safer, the far better course, to adapt the improvements proposed to the existing

existing state of the country, and to effect these changes by consent, and through the intervention of Parliament itself.

With respect to the question, who shall be deemed, in the eye of the law, decent householders, and fit to be entrusted with the Right of Suffrage, it is admitted, that the answer to it is not unattended with difficulties, but for which various solutions have occurred. It will be allowed, perhaps, that the householder who not only supports his own family, but contributes to the support of others who may be distressed, might be considered as a decent or substantial householder. For England and Wales this might be a good criterion to ascertain the right to vote; but as contributions to the poor are not legally established in Scotland, the payment of such contributions would be an insufficient rule. It has been thought, that a person who pays the window-tax might be properly deemed a decent householder, and as such entitled to vote, and this mode of ascertaining that right is preferable to the mode first mentioned, because it would equally apply to every part of Great-Britain. But in this mode, householders properly qualified to vote, might sometimes be excluded from that right because of their smallness, not of their fortune but their habitation, they happened not to be liable to pay the tax upon windows. To obviate this difficulty householders possessing personal property to the amount

amount of 100l. might be allowed to vote. That property in any part of the kingdom is sufficient to purchase a freehold qualification to vote : Householders of that description are in every view equal to the lowest class of freeholders, and from the more perishable nature of their personal property, it may be justly concluded, they would ever be found at least as much attached to the preservation of peace and order, as persons who possessing landed estates are less exposed to injury and ruin from any popular commotion ; and their personal qualification might be ascertained, on the establishment of a Register, in the very same mode, and with as much certainty and clearness as the qualifications of the Proprietors of freehold estates. But should none of those modes be thought satisfactory ; the difficulty will be readily surmounted, when Parliament has once determined, that decent householders ought to be admitted to vote. It is sufficient for a private individual to suggest the principle ; the mode of applying it, and carrying it into practice, is left, as it ought to be left, with deference to men of superior authority, more experience, and greater legal knowledge.

In fine, it may be objected by some, among those prudent Lovers of Liberty, whose approbation is most to be coveted, that it is a hopeless attempt, to promote a moderate Reformation of Parliament, in these violent times ;
when

when on the one hand popular associations, in their rash zeal for Liberty, have applauded publications * in which the British People are represented to have no Constitution, no political right, but the unavailing right to petition; and the plunder of the rich is held out, as the incentive to the poor, to effect a Revolution in Britain, on the principles of Republican Equality: thus, under the pretext of promoting Personal Liberty, contributing to the ruin of property, the preservation of which was one principal end, for which Society was formed:— And when on the other hand, Associations zealous for the Constitution, as they assert, with equal rashness have applauded that Author,† who after having endeavoured to destroy the Representative Rights of the People, and to confirm the abuses and usurpations of which they complain, has laboured to deprive them even of the hope of future redress, and to rob them of their last and most ancient right, solemnly recognized at the Revolution of 1688; their right to meet, in their collective capacity, to consider the grievances endured, and to petition for their removal: thus, under the pretext of defending property, contributing to the ruin of our Personal Rights, the preservation of which was the other great and principal end for which Society was established. To such Men, it were,

* Mr. Paine's.—† Mr. A. Young,

indeed

indeed, a fruitless task to preach moderation, and a just regard to the Constitution." But because there exists manifest danger from the violence of these opposite Associations, that is not a reason for indifference and inactivity, it is a reason why a vigorous effort should be made to preserve the Constitution from these hostile extremes. They who wish to enjoy Peace, Property, and their undoubted Liberties, on the genuine principles of our Constitution, are still the most considerable part of the nation; misled they may have been by rumours, surmises, and the various fallacies of artful Men; corrupted they never can be; they never can be indifferent to the welfare of their Country. To their judgement therefore these propositions are committed, and success is alone wished and expected from their approbation, from their union and zeal to support a good, a prudent, and a strictly limited end, by those regular and peaceful means which under our Constitution, impaired as it is, we have yet a right to employ.

In still adhering to these sentiments and to this middle course of action, unbiassed by the altered interests or opinions of Statesmen, unchanged by the heated temper of the times, unrelaxed by the usual indolence of his age, and undaunted by the slanders and invectives which may yet await him, the Author of this Paper feels the satisfaction of an approving mind. Whether amidst the conflict of contending parties, and
the

the jarring of irritated passions, the voice of an individual, recommending moderation and a conciliatory spirit, mutually to concede and accept a temperate Reform of Parliament, may be sufficiently heard and attended to, he knows not. His sentiments, unwelcome as they may be to many, it is his duty not to conceal; they proceed from a sincere but anxious heart; they are offered to the Public without a fear or a wish for himself; but for the welfare of his Country, for the general happiness of Mankind, his earnest prayer to the Supreme Ruler of events will be, that He may dispose our hearts to adopt those counsels, whatever they may be, which tend most directly to promote the cause of virtuous Liberty, and to preserve the peace of the Community.

APPENDIX the SECOND.

*Account of the Debate in the House of Commons,
on the 7th of May, 1783, on the Motion of the
Honourable William Pitt for a Reform of
Parliament.*

AN immense concourse of People assembled early in the lobby, and avenues leading to the House; the gallery was full before twelve o'clock, and yet the business, which attracted the attention of the Public, did not begin till a quarter after four. Before Mr. Pitt rose, several Petitions were presented to the House from various descriptions of Persons, praying for a Reformation in the Representation of the People in Parliament; one was presented by Mr. Marshall, from the Freeholders of the County of Kent; another from Freeholders whose Freeholds lie in the City of London; a third was presented by Mr. Byng, from the Householders of the Tower Hamlets; and a fourth by Mr. Fox, from the Electors of Westminster. After all these Petitions had been received and read, and all the other Petitions on the same subject, which had been presented during the preceding month,

month, had been brought into the House by the Clerk, and laid on the floor near the table,

Mr. W. Pitt rose to open the business—He declared that in his life he had never felt more embarrassment, or more anxiety, than he felt at that moment, when, for his Country's good, he found himself obliged to discover, and lay before the House, the imperfections of that Constitution to which every Englishman ought to look up with reverential awe; a Constitution which, while it continued, such as it was framed by our Ancestors, was truly called the production of the most consummate wisdom; raised by that Constitution to greatness and to glory, England had been at once the envy and the pride of the world. Europe was taught by experience, that Liberty was the foundation of true greatness; and that while England remained under a Government perfectly free, she never failed to perform exploits that dazzled the neighbouring nations: But a melancholy series of events, which had eclipsed the glory of Britain, exhibited a reverse of fortune, which could be accounted for only upon this principle, that, during the last fifteen years, there had been a deviation from the principles of that happy Constitution, under which the People of England had so long flourished. It was not for himself, he said, with unhallowed hands to touch the venerable Pile of the Constitution, and deface the Fabric; to see it stand in need of

repair, was sufficiently melancholy; but the more he revered it, the more he wished to secure its duration to the latest posterity, the greater he felt the necessity of guarding against its decay. Innovations were at all times dangerous, and should never be attempted but when necessity called for them. Upon this principle he had given up the idea which he suggested to the House last year; and therefore his object at present was not to innovate, but rather to renew and invigorate the spirit of the Constitution, without deviating materially from its present form. When he submitted this subject to the consideration of the House last year, he was told that subject ought not to be discussed amidst the din of arms; the objection was not then without its force; but at present it could not be renewed, as we were happily once more in the enjoyments of the blessings of peace.— This therefore was a proper time to enter upon the business of a Reformation, which every man, who gave himself a moment's time to think, must be satisfied, was absolutely necessary. An Englishman, who should compare the flourishing state of his Country some 20 years ago, with the state of humiliation in which he now beholds her, must be convinced, that the ruin, which he now deploras, having been brought on by slow degrees, and almost imperceptibly, proceeded from something radically wrong in the Constitution: Of the existence of a radical error,

ror, no one seemed to doubt; nay almost all were so clearly satisfied of it, that various remedies had been devised by those who wished most heartily to remove it. The House itself had discovered that a secret influence of the Crown was sapping the very foundation of Liberty by corruption: The influence of the Crown had been felt within those walls, and had often been found strong enough to stifle the sense of duty, and to over-rule the propositions made to satisfy the wishes and desires of the People. The House of Commons (in former Parliaments) had been base enough to feed the influence that enslaved its Members; and thus was at one time the parent and the offspring of corruption. This influence, however, had risen to such a height, that men were ashamed any longer to deny its existence, and the House had at length been driven to the necessity of voting, that it ought to be diminished. Various were the expedients that had been thought of, in order to effect so salutary a purpose, as was that of guarding against this influence; of shutting against it the doors of that House, where if it once got footing after the resolution alluded to, Liberty could no longer find an Asylum: The House of Commons which, according to the true spirit of the Constitution, should be the Guardian of the People's Freedom: The constitutional check and controul over the Executive Power, would, through this influence,

degenerate into a mere engine of tyranny and oppression, to destroy the Constitution in effect, though it should in its outward form still remain. Among the various expedients that had been devised to bar the entrance of such influence into the House, he had heard principally of three: One was to extend the Right of Voting for Members to serve in Parliament, which was now so confined, to all the inhabitants of the Kingdom indiscriminately; so that every man, without the distinction of Freeholder, or Freeman of a Corporation, should have the franchise of a Vote for a person to represent him in Parliament; and this mode he understood was thought by those who patronised it, as the only one that was consistent with true Liberty in a free Constitution, where every one ought to be governed by those laws only, to which they have actually given their consent, either in Person or by their Representative. For his part, he utterly rejected and condemned this mode, which it was impossible for him to adopt, without libelling those renowned forefathers who had framed the Constitution in the fulness of their wisdom, and fashioned it for the Government of Freemen, not Slaves: If this doctrine should obtain, nearly one half of the People must in fact be Slaves, for it was absolutely impossible, that this idea of giving to every Man a Right of Voting, however, finely it might appear in theory, could ever be reduced

to

to practice; but though it were even practicable, still one half of the Nation would be Slaves; for all those who Vote for the unsuccessful Candidates, cannot, in the strictness of this doctrine, be said to be represented in Parliament; and therefore they are governed by laws to which they give not their assent, either in Person or by Representatives; consequently, according to the ideas of the Friends to this expedient, all those who Vote for unsuccessful Candidates, must be Slaves: Nay it was still harder with those Members of Parliament who are made Slaves also, when they are governed by laws to which they not only have not given their consent, but against which they have actually voted. For his part, his idea of Representation was this, that the Members once chosen and returned to Parliament, were in effect the Representatives of the People at large, as well of those who did not Vote at all, or who, having voted, gave their Votes against them, as of those by whose suffrages they were actually seated in the House. This being therefore his principle, he could not consent to an innovation founded on doctrines subversive of Liberty; which in reality, went so far as to say, that this House of Commons never had been a true and Constitutional Representation of the People—for no House of Commons had yet been elected by all the Men in the Kingdom. The country had long prospered, and had even

attained the very summit of Glory, though this doctrine had never been embraced ; and he hoped that no one would ever attempt to introduce it in the Laws of England, or treat it in any other light than as a mere speculative Proposition, that may be good in theory, but which it would be absurd and chimerical to endeavour to reduce to practice. The second expedient he had heard of was to abolish the franchise which several Boroughs now enjoy of returning Members to serve in Parliament. These places were known by the favourite, popular appellation of rotten Boroughs ; he confessed that there was something very plausible in this idea ; but still he was not ready to adopt it : He held these Boroughs in the light of deformities, which, in some degree, disfigured the fabric of the Constitution, but which he feared could not be removed without endangering the whole Pile. It was true, that the Representation of the People could not be perfect, nay it could not be good, unless the interests of the Representatives and the represented, were the same ; the moment they became different, from that moment the Liberty of the People was in danger ; because those who ought to be the guardians of it, might find their accounts in circumscribing it within narrower limits than it ought to be ; or in carrying through measures which might in the end, effectually destroy it : It must be admitted, from a variety of circumstances,

cumstances, which it was unnecessary for him
 at present to explain, that though the Members
 returned by Boroughs might be, for the present,
 the brightest patterns of Patriotism and Li-
 berty; still there was no doubt but that Bo-
 rough Members, considered in the abstract,
 are more liable to the operation of that influ-
 ence, which every good man wished to see de-
 stroyed in that House, than those Members who
 are returned by the Counties; and therefore,
 though he was afraid to cut up the roots of this
 influence, by disfranchising the Boroughs, be-
 cause he was afraid of doing more harm than
 good, by using a remedy that might be thought
 worse than the disease, still he thought it his
 duty to counteract, if possible, that influence,
 the instruments of which he was afraid to re-
 move; the Boroughs ought to be considered
 not only as places of franchise, but also
 places where the franchise was in some measure
 connected with property, by burgage tenure;
 and therefore, as he was unwilling to dissolve
 the Boroughs, he would endeavour to defeat
 the effect of undue influence in them, by intro-
 ducing and establishing a counterbalance that
 should keep it down, and prevent it from ruin-
 ing the Country; this brought him naturally
 to the third expedient, that he had often heard
 mentioned, which was to add a certain num-
 ber of Members to the House, who should be
 returned by the Counties and the Metropolis;

it

it was unnecessary for him to say, that the County Members in general, were almost necessarily taken from that class and description of Gentlemen, the least liable to the seduction of corrupt influence; the most deeply interested in the Liberty and Prosperity of the Country, and consequently the most likely to pursue such measures as appear to them the most salutary to their Country—in the hands of such Men, the Liberty of their Constituents would be safe, because the interests of such Representatives and the Represented, must necessarily be the same; this expedient appeared to him the most fit to be adopted, because it was the least objectionable; it had the merit of promising an effectual counterbalance to the weight of the Boroughs, without being an innovation in the form of the Constitution. He would not then say what number of Members ought to be added to the Counties, he would leave that to be inserted in a Bill, which, if the Resolutions he meant to propose, should pass, he intended to move for leave to bring in. However, he would say, that in his opinion, the number ought not to be under one hundred. It was true that he thought the House would then be more numerous than he could wish; but still it were better it should be so, than that the Liberties of the Country should be exposed to destruction from the baleful influence of the Crown in the Boroughs. He was not, however,
without

without an expedient, by degrees to reduce the number of Members, even after the addition, down to nearly the present number; his expedient was this, that whenever it should be proved before the Tribunal which happily was now established by law, to try the merits of contested Election, that the majority of any Borough had been bribed and corrupted, the Borough should then lose the privilege of sending Members to Parliament; the corrupt majority should be disfranchised, and the honest minority be permitted to Vote at Elections of Knights of the Shire: By this expedient he was sure the Boroughs would be preserved free from corruption, or else they must be abolished gradually, and the number of Members of that House reduced to its present standard. This disfranchising of Boroughs would be the work of time; the necessity of disfranchising any one, whenever that necessity should appear, would sanctify the measure; it would appear to be, what in fact it would then be, an Act of Justice, not of Whim, Party, or Caprice; as it would be founded not on surmise, but on the actual proof of guilt. Mr. Pitt then stated to the House, that he had drawn up three resolutions for their consideration, which he begged leave to read. The first was, that the most effectual measures ought to be adopted for preventing bribery and expences at Elections: The second, that if any Borough shall be convicted

victed of Bribery and Corruption, it shall be disfranchised ; but that such of the Electors as were not found guilty, shall be admitted to Vote at Elections of Members for the County in which the Borough was : The third, that an addition ought to be made to the Members of Counties in order to strengthen that communication of interests, which should ever subsist between the People and their Representatives.

Mr. Pitt then observed to the House, that he had little dread about the fate of the two first Resolutions, as he could not see any possible objection which could lie against them.— He wished he could be as decided in his opinion, with respect to the third ; however, he had no doubt, if prejudice and passion were laid aside, but that the sound judgment of the House would point out to them the propriety of agreeing to this Resolution, as well as the two former : it was worded with caution, and guarded against every objection which could be foreseen ; and if the House should concur in this Resolution, the proportion in which the addition of Members should be made to each County, might be settled in the Bill, for which, in that case, he should move for leave to bring in.

He then concluded with moving the first Resolution.

Mr. Duncombe seconded the Motion, which he said had his hearty approbation. He was
thoroughly

thoroughly convinced that the Representation of the People was extremely defective, and ought to be amended; this was his opinion, and he would add, it was the general opinion of his Constituents; on this circumstance he laid the greatest stress, as he thought, on the true principles of our Constitution, every Representative was bound to pay the utmost deference to the wishes of his Constituents, when clearly understood, more especially on a subject like this, in which their interest was so deeply and immediately concerned.

Mr. Powis said, he did not rise to set in competition his poor character with the transcendent abilities of the Right Honourable Gentleman who spoke last but one, that certainly would be the highest presumption in him; but as, from some circumstances, it so fell out last year, that he was the first person who spoke in Opposition to the Right Honourable Gentleman's Motion, so he thought himself particularly called on to deliver his sentiments on the present occasion. The reason of his Opposition last year was principally, that he imagined that in the midst of the din of arms, that it was not a fit season to deliberate on a business of such magnitude, as the total alteration of our Constitution; besides, there did not appear to him any satisfactory cause of remedying evils which had little or no foundation, if he could judge from the Constitution performing its functions equally.

equally as well as if no such evils had existed. He confessed many of his objections of last year were removed by the manner in which the Right Honourable Gentleman brought forward his Propositions this year ; yet, notwithstanding, he was not ready to give his assent to a measure, which seemed not only useless but dangerous. He was no friend to experiments or idle speculations, where no great good could arise, but where much mischief might be the consequence. There was another strong argument for his not agreeing to the Propositions, that he was ignorant whether the People would rest satisfied with what was done, should the House approve of the Reform, which has been so eagerly and so warmly pressed by the Honourable Gentleman. If he was to credit several publications on the subject, coming from very respectable quarters, he should conclude they would not. Therefore it would be wrong to comply with requests in the first instance, when by so doing you only encourage the party to make fresh demands. He then read, in support of his opinion, that the People looked for a more extensive Reform than that proposed, a Passage from a Pamphlet, said to be written by a Noble Lord, whom Mr. Powis declared he understood to be the main spring of this baseless fabric) which seemed to corroborate what he had asserted. He read likewise another Passage from a Pamphlet written by the
Constitutional

Constitutional Society, all tending to prove the truth of what he had advanced. He now adverted to the different methods which had been practised to procure the Petitions which had been sent up to Parliament, and said, he was confident the House would not be astonished at their number, when he told them, that Missionaries of the first rank were despatched to various parts of the country, not to preach humiliation and self-denial, but to inflame the minds of the People, and to induce them to state grievances which they were conscious were but ideal, and could answer no other purpose but to occasion anarchy and confusion throughout the Nation. Mr. Powis now desired the Clerk to read the Petition from Birmingham, but being answered there was none; What! replied he—None! (this affected surprize created a great laugh) What! None! repeated he again. Are all these People Slaves? Do they not murmur at their base condition? I should have imagined if there were really a grievance in point of Representation; that so great a portion of the Inhabitants of this Country would have felt it, and of course would have spoke out on the occasion. He would ask the Right Honourable Gentleman who complained of the abuses of the Representation of the Commons, if he would state under what Prince, or in what part of our history, we were free from those imaginary evils? He knew of no period when the Constitution

tution was more perfect. The Glorious Revolution had been brought about under it, and our Liberties, Lives, and Properties had been secured and preserved by it for centuries, it was not wonderful, therefore, he should watch with a jealous eye the minutest alteration in it. He would, with the permission of the House, put a case, which might elucidate the matter better than any thing he had yet said. Suppose a man with a crooked leg should be met by a person in the street, who should address him by lamenting the misfortune that had happened to him, and express his sorrow that he would not be able to use his leg in future.—But replies the other, you are mistaken, Sir, I can use it very well, and it answers all the purposes for which it was intended equally as well as if it had been ever so straight. Just so it is with the Constitution, and for that reason he should object to the Right Honourable Gentleman's Motion; and would, therefore, move the order of the day.

Mr. Thomas Pitt said, he was happy to find his Honourable Friend had so modelled his Plan of Reform, as not to occasion that alarm which his Motion of last year did. He then aimed at no less than a total overthrow of the Constitution, and the erecting in its stead another, one more pleasing to his fancy. Sooner than he would have assented to such a measure, he would have parted with his life.—When he heard

heard his Honourable Friend declare his intention not to meddle with the Boroughs, it afforded him great satisfaction, because if such a dangerous attempt was made, he was convinced there was an end of our Government, it would be productive of anarchy and disorders of every nature. When he spoke on this subject, he found himself in a very awkward situation, because, let his motives be ever so pure, and ever so virtuous, there would be found envious people in the world, who would impute them to some self-interest. To convince such men that his intention was upright, and that he only consulted, in what he had advanced, the good of the Nation at Large, he would willingly be the first to offer himself as a sacrifice, and deliver up the Borough he Represented, to be disposed of as should be thought proper. He did not do this out of ostentation, because he did not wish it should affect the property of others, or that they should consider it as an example they were bound to follow. He only desired to see some permanent Government established, that we might be no longer the ridicule of all Europe, on account of the fluctuating state of the Executive Department of this Country. The Government one day appears like an absolute Monarchy, doing every thing in defiance of the Voice of the People, and another day affairs take a different complexion, and every thing

VOL. II. T t appears

appears wild Republicanism, forcing the Crown into measures to which it was totally averse.— The greater number of County Members, the better, said Mr. Pitt, it will be for the Country; however, a hundred additional Knights of the Shire were too much, and would make the House too unweildy; if there were added one to each County in England and Wales, he was sure it would be more beneficial to the Constitution than if the numbers were greater.

Sir George Savile then rose to support the Propositions, and the House testified more than common anxiety to hear him, observing his frame enfeebled by his late indisposition, and evidently unable to bear the fatigue of any great exertion; which yet he was eager to make on this occasion, and to perform, what he was probably conscious, would be his last service to his Constituents and his Country.

He alledged that the Propositions were not offered as a remedy for merely speculative evils; but to correct abuses which experience had proved to be productive of the greatest misfortunes to the Public. The War for seven years in America had been the offspring of that corruption in the State, which the Propositions were intended to remove. That destructive War had been carried on against our oppressed Fellow Subjects in that Country, at the expence of one hundred millions of Treasure, and with the loss of one hundred thousand
Lives;

Lives; it had produced the dismemberment of our Empire, and brought Great-Britain to the brink of ruin. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powis) had insisted on the folly of listening to every idle complaint, and taking the prescription of every Political Quack, who might offer his nostrum, even in cases where no real disease existed. Sir George perfectly co-incided in sentiments with that Gentleman. It would be folly indeed, to attend to the prescriptions of every pretender to medical skill; or to listen to complaints and apply remedies to them, without proper examination, as quacks would do. But at the same time he was clear, that no person in his senses, when he perceived evident symptoms of disorder in another, when he heard the groans of disease, would affect to believe, that the unhappy patient did not feel what he grievously complained of. It might be said indeed, that the afflicted person demanded what was improper for his cure; as in the case of madness; be it so; it is then the duty of the real Physician to examine the disorder himself; since the patient is incapable of describing his ailment, or pointing out salutary measures for his restoration; and the disorder once ascertained, without attending to the calls of one, who knows not the virtue of what he calls for, the man of skill is then to meet it with that medicine which in his opinion will best operate for the

sanity required.—More he was proceeding to offer to the House, but his speech which had faltered in the course of this argument, here failed him altogether, he fainted and sunk down. After some pause, and evident marks of regret and esteem from all parts of the House, the Debate was resumed.

Mr. Byng could not bring himself to think with those Gentlemen who considered the propriety of a more equal Representation a mere chimera. If, according to the Honourable Gentleman's (Mr. Powis) illustration—a man had a crooked leg, and there was any possibility of safely removing the deformity and rendering the limb more useful, surely were he in possession of understanding or common fortitude, he would not hesitate to render himself less imperfect. He would not indeed, go to quacks to perform the operation on him; but he would do, (what the Petitioners in the present case had done) he would apply to such whose knowledge and ability were indisputable for the purpose of his cure. Mr. Byng said, he would not enter into the reasons why other respectable portions of the People of this Country had not joined in the Petitions for Reform, with those who had expressed their sentiments to the House on the necessity of that measure; but he would give a strong reason why the Petition he had that day the honour of presenting to the House, was, in his mind,
well

well founded, as he trusted it would be in the minds of all who heard him, when he stated it, The inhabitants of Tower Hamlet, whose Petition he alluded to, paid no less than 34,000*l.* of the Land Tax; the whole County of Cornwall paid a smaller sum by 2000*l.*—The County of Cornwall sent forty-four Members to Parliament; the Tower Hamlet sent not one. This was so striking a defect in the Representation of this Country, that to multiply instances after such a one, would, in his opinion, be quite unnecessary; he would not therefore occupy more of the time of the House upon this subject, but content himself with giving the Resolutions moved for, his hearty assent.

Lord Mulgrave spoke a considerable time against the Motion, but in a tone more than usually low. All we could collect from him was, that as every precaution that could be taken to prevent corruption and undue influence had been already taken, the measures now suggested seemed to him totally useless.—Men must reform human nature itself, before they indulge the visionary fancies of framing a perfect Constitution; a Constitution entirely free from fault. The People who have sinister views in Voting for two Members of Parliament, will not grow honest on a sudden, on finding that they have three to Vote for; and with respect to the fears that Gentlemen seemed to feel for the resentment of the Petitioners,

if their Petitions should be totally rejected, he could only say, that to give way to imaginary grievances but one step, would be to confirm the evil, intended only to be palliated. No, to temporize in this case, would be to run into the very danger meant to be avoided. As an honest independent Member of Parliament, he must reprobate such timid compromising. Give them but a little, say Gentlemen, and they will be the less dissatisfied at not obtaining the whole. No, if it is not really thought that even that little would be beneficial, that little ought to be refused. The Representatives of the People are not sent to Parliament to humour their prejudices, they are sent to guard their real interests, and provide for their welfare, neither the one or the other of these great objects, could, in his Lordship's opinion, be attained by the present application, and he therefore gave it his negative.

Lord North desired the Resolutions to be read, which being done, his Lordship said, that he had given the greatest attention to every thing that had fallen from the Gentlemen who were Friends to the Motion, and particularly to the apprehensions which the most sanguine of its favourers (Mr. William Pitt and Mr. Thomas Pitt) had entertained, on entering upon the very nice operation, to which the Resolutions were preparatory. In the whole course of his Parliamentary engagements, he
had

had never listened with so much care to any Speech that had been made by any Member, as he had to the one made by the Right Honourable Mover, and he must do that Gentleman the justice to say, that he had never in his life been better paid for his attention. The candour, the moderation, the ingenuity, and eloquence displayed by that Gentleman, were such, as did honour to the illustrious Body of which he formed so very distinguished a portion. But the Gentleman had prefaced his Motion with expressing the dread he felt in touching so venerable a subject as the Constitution, though for the very express purpose of amending it. That expression was the expression of sound sense. The attempt was of the nicest and most delicate nature that the mind of man could possibly conceive. It was to tamper with that Fabric which for ages had stood the boast of Britons, and the admiration and envy of all the world besides. And on what ground! Ought not an Englishman, who was blessed with such a pre-eminent Form of Government, to pause a moment, and to ask himself, ere he ventured to innovate upon such a Form, on what grounds he was going to proceed in so awful an undertaking. And when he had asked himself that, and reflected on what he was about to do, would any man in his senses, say, that aught but frenzy could excuse such a person from laying violent hands

upon the Constitution, with no other foundation for his conduct, than the mere fancy of its being disordered, independent of any solid evidence of distemper. Had the Right Honourable Gentleman who made the Motion, laid down any proof of the disorder intended to be remedied? He had not; neither had any of those who supported it. Much declamation indeed had been made use of both by him and them, grounded on evils which no one of them could deplore more than he did. But these evils, these misfortunes, these calamities, were as little imputable to any defect in the Constitution, as the earthquake of Lisbon was to the Government of that Country. Much had been said of the American War, and of the causes of it: as to himself he was free to acknowledge at all times the hand which he had in that War. [*Here there was a cry of hear him.*] By the cry of hear him, which I notice, said his Lordship, from the other side of the House, Gentlemen seem to think I am going to make apology or confession—they were never more mistaken. Let guilt confess and apologize. I know none.—But I will be ready at all times to vindicate my conduct whenever Gentlemen shall think fit to attack it. An Honourable Member near me (Mr. T. Pitt) has said that the Constitution is unound, rocking to and fro like a weathercock with every blast of wind, for want of something to keep it steady; he describes the
Crown,

Crown, by virtue of its great influence, as keeping a wicked Ministry in their offices, contrary to the sense of the People; and he describes the same powerful Crown as itself incroached on, stripped of its influence, and led into captivity. How the Honourable Gentleman can reconcile two such jarring descriptions, it is not in my power to conceive; but this I know, that they may neither of them be true, though very probably they may both of them be false. To remedy these supposed grievances, one hundred Knights are demanded in addition to the County Members; but I say, as I trust the majority will say, "No—not fifty"—What! not fifty? "No—not one." I must see better grounds for the demand before I can venture my compliance with it. But then, as the Favourers of this measure cannot adduce any solid reasons in support of their wishes, they are fruitful in imaginary ones: the American War, with all its horrors and misfortunes, are pathetically dressed up, and laid at the door of a worn-out, battered, and enfeebled Constitution. The American War, was, as they suggest, the War of the Crown, contrary to the wishes of the People. I deny it. It was the War of Parliament, there was not a step taken in it that had not the sanction of Parliament. It was the War of the People; nor did it ever cease to be popular, until a series of the most unparalleled disasters and calamities,

calamities, caused the People, wearied out with almost uninterrupted ill success and misfortune, to call out as loudly for Peace as they had formerly done for War. Had the Constitution been so disordered as the Reformers would persuade us that it is, how comes it to pass that the voice of the People prevailed against the influence of the Crown. This is a recent transaction. The policy of discontinuing the War I shall not now speak of, but that the House of Commons directed the measure, no one can deny; of course, the influence of the Crown, if ever it had been prevalent, was then no more. Has it since that period broke beyond its bounds? Has it threatened any abuse of the Constitution, which could excite those jealousies and fears, which Gentlemen affect to imagine, prevail among the People?—Not a tittle of any such grounds do I perceive, either in the Petition which had been presented, or in the arguments that have been used in support of these Petitions; but what is the weight of the Petitions themselves? Let us examine the matter. It was used as an argument for delaying the consideration of this business, when the Right Honourable Gentleman who now moves it, first brought it forward last year, that it were better not to take it up too suddenly, but to give the People time to reflect on it, and in the interim, between that period, and the next agitation of it, their sense might

might be more clearly collected. What has been the result? After many months given to the People to ponder well upon their grievances, if any they really had, in respect to the insufficiency of Representation, only fourteen out of fifty-two Counties have presented Petitions on this account. And how are these Petitions signed? by infinitely the minority of each County. Here is, among others, a Petition from the County of Somerset, a County which I know well, and know in general to be averse to this pretended Reform. Indeed there cannot be a stronger proof of this disposition, than the very few names, which out of such a number of qualified People as that County contains, appear as signatures to the Petition—only six hundred!—There is another Petition, the Suffex one—signed only by the Sheriff! Here is Representation with a witness. The whole County of Suffex represented by their Sheriff! In a word, of so many millions of inhabitants as England and Wales contain, there are no more than about 20,000 People, and what in general these twenty thousand are, (God alone knows) who have found fault with the Representation of the Country. Among these discontented People the Petitioners of one County, I mean Yorkshire, may perhaps be a majority of the Freeholders of that County. But it is not the mere paucity of the subscribers, though that alone ought to forbid you to attempt innovations to gratify their whims, at the expence

pence of the more sensible feelings of the vast majority of the Nation, who, by their silence on this occasion, shew their perfect contentment with the present form of Government. It is not on this paucity alone, that I would have the House to ground their rejection of the Petitions. To that consideration I would add the manner in which these Petitions have been obtained. They have been obtained, not from the Public in general, but from the prejudiced part of that Public. The Assizes are held twice every year. The Sessions four times. On all of these occasions, the Inhabitants of each County may be said to meet in that most fair and most indiscriminate manner, in which it may in candour be supposed the real sense of the mass of the People might be best collected, if the real sense was intended to be collected. Was this the manner in which the Petitions were founded? Was it in this fairest of all fair modes that the sense of the Public was taken? No! County Meetings, as they are called, were had—projectors, with set Speeches, and ready framed Petitions, were there prepared to meet a number of prejudiced People, who came invited to sign that which was ready for their signature. The question was begged, or borrowed, or stole, hospitably to accommodate the craving appetites of such coming guests. Those who liked neither the invitation or the fare, very prudently remained at their
their

their own homes ; and the question in short, now is, to whom we are to pay respect ? The few Reformers, or the multitude of Contents ? Can this be a serious question ? (There was a great cry of *hear him*) I perceive it cannot. I shall not dwell upon a matter which this voice of the House declares it to be unnecessary that I should dwell on : But I would intreat their indulgence while I say a word or two in answer to some insinuations that affect myself personally ; not that I would presume to take up the time of the House on any matter that concerned my mere self ; but as I conceive it will afford a further argument against the measure we are now pressed to adopt ; I am the more encouraged to hope this favour.—Indeed, said his Lordship, casting his eyes towards the clock, I fear I have already troubled the House too long, and that they feel the misfortune of my being unable to see the motions of *you* monitor ; but (here the whole House loudly requested him to proceed) well, Mr. Speaker, continued his Lordship, the matter to which I allude, is the insinuation thrown out respecting bad Ministers being continued in office, against the voice of the People, by the overruling influence of the Crown. This is *not* a random stroke—from the quarter from whence it came, the direction may be known—I will not affect to think it is not levelled at me.—But, *multum abludit Imago*—I trust the candid

did and discerning part of the House, will see that the attack is most unjust. I was not, when I was honoured with office, a Minister of Chance, or a Creature of whom Parliament had not experience: I was found among you when I was so honoured: I had been long known to you. In consequence, I obtained your support; when that support was withdrawn; I ceased to be a Minister: I was the Creature of Parliament in my rise; when I fell, I was its victim. Does this shew the undue influence of the Crown, or is it not, on the contrary, the strongest proof that can be given of the potent efficacy of the Public voice? If then, that voice is so powerful as to remove whatever may be displeasing to the opinions of the Country; what need is there of this paraded Reformation? There is a Bill now printed for the use of the House, to remedy every grievance in point of expence and bribery at Elections, to which the Resolution at present moved for goes; and on that ground alone, I would think myself justified in negating the motion; but when to this consideration is added, the want of any proof of disorder in this glorious fabric; as the Right Honourable Mover justly styled our Constitution. When a remedy is sought for a disease, I know not what; when the puny voice of a few discontented People breaks in upon the tranquillity and reverend silence of the vast and satisfied multitude; when even
the

the discontented themselves are at variance with respect to the nature of their grievances, and the modes of their redress; when (I say) all these things are considered, a doubt cannot remain for a moment on my mind, of the weakness of giving way to this froward humour; this spirit of projection; they but little know mankind, who imagine that a small indulgence will not induce a pressure for greater. Principles obsta—Let us act like men. We are not the Deputies, but the Representatives of the People: We are not to refer to them before we determine: We stand here as they would stand; to use our own discretion without seeking any other guidance under Heaven. In a word, as no defect in the Constitution has been proved, as we have heard nothing but declamation and surmise to warrant so awful and so very important a measure as an innovation on the form of that venerable Palladium, which ages have sanctified down to us, let us, again let me conjure you, act like Men, and like Britons, and reject—what to adopt must inevitably lead to ruin. I have freely given you my thoughts; it remains that I perform my duty. The best way of getting rid of this destructive Resolution, was certainly the Motion for the order of the day. And that Motion has most cordially my wishes.

Mr. T. Pitt rose to explain. The Noble Lord who spoke last, had supposed that he had said

said that the Crown was incroaching upon the Rights of the People; at the same time that the Crown was itself made captive by the Power of the Commons. This was an absurdity which he could not by any means be guilty of. What he said was in the memory of the House; but the Noble Lord was fond of reconciling contradictions, and had raised one probably to shew his ingenuity.

Mr. Beaufoy said, that after the great display of ability and talents, which he had been witness to in the course of the night's debate, he rose with much diffidence to express his sentiments upon the present important subject, and should require the more than candour of the House: He should require their generosity. The only argument of the appearance of any force which had been used against the Motion, was, that the Resolution it sought to obtain was pregnant with innovation, and of course with destruction; but did that necessarily follow? By no means.—If innovation were to have necessarily such a consequence, our freedom would not be in existence a day. So far from innovation producing fatality to the Constitution, it had made what had been so frequently and so properly stiled, during the course of the debate, the Constitution, glorious as it was. Was there any criterion at which the Constitution was so fixed, that no Reform could henceforward ever take place with regard

regard to it, without subjecting it to the ruin now prophesied concerning the present attempt to invigorate it?—If there was, would it not have been found sense, and what, in fair reasoning, might have been expected, that such criterion be pointed out. No such criterion ever occurred to him in all his reading or experience. On the contrary, innovations and those of the most salutary consequences, crowded the pages of our history. In this place Mr. Beaufoy entered into an historic detail of the principal changes which the Constitution had undergone since the days of Edward the First, down to the present times, and after displaying a great deal of knowledge in the History of his Country, applied it with great happiness to the question moved by Mr. Pitt, which he concluded a Speech of considerable length and much elegance with his entire assent to.

Mr. Secretary Fox rose and remarked to the House, that he made no doubt there were some persons present who would attribute what he said on one side to lukewarmness, and not to any zeal; however, regardless of their censure, he would freely deliver his sentiments, and assure the House that he most heartily concurred with the Right Honourable Gentleman who made the Motion, that the Constitution required some Reform, and so far from its being absurd to make any innovation on it, he was certain that the nature of our Constitution required innovation and renovation; for the

beauty of the Constitution did not consist as some people imagined, in theory but in the practice. The theory was in its nature found by experience to be absurd in several parts, for, as it was composed of three States — King, Lords, and Commons, it was absurd to think that one man should have an equal power to the whole multitude; therefore, in that practical part, that power was wisely curtailed, and not left in the breast of one man, but in a Government consisting of several Ministers. The Right Honourable Secretary said much had been mentioned relative to the shortening the duration of Parliament, and some persons attributed all our calamities to the want of short Parliaments; he had looked into history, and found that when Parliaments were more frequent, the Nation was more brilliant and successful; he had also observed, that for a period of many years since the passing of the Septennial Bill, the Nation has been at the pinnacle of its glory, therefore he could infer nothing from that, nor did he in fact see that material either way. The Noble Lord, in talking of the American War, had said it was popular in the beginning, that it had been begun agreeable to the wishes of the People and carried on by their consent, until it proved unsuccessful, when a stop was put to it, he differed with him; for although it had undoubtedly been begun by their wishes, the People were not putting an end to it much sooner than



than it was ended ; and there he saw the defect of the House of Commons ; it did not speak the wishes of the People quick enough. He begged leave to revert to the two hypotheses mentioned by Mr. T. Pitt, wherein he said the despotism of the Crown had continued a Minister in power against the wishes of the People ; and the Republicanism of the People, had, in grasping for power, taken the Crown captive, and robbed it of its prerogative. Certainly in the course of two years, something like that had happened, but he denied that in all the contentions he had held, and the systematic Opposition (as it had been called) that he gave to the Noble Lord, that ever he struggled for power.

With respect to what the Noble Lord had said, that by adding more Knights for the Counties, the landed would overmatch the commercial interest. He could by no means see that to be the fact, for commerce now had spread itself so universally, the landed and the commercial interests were inseparable ; therefore he was not afraid from any harm in that quarter ; nor did he fear much from the Aristocracy that would be occasioned : For although the motion went to a Resolution to add more Members to the Counties and Capital, it by no means confined Gentlemen from making any wise regulations in the Bill that would be brought in, if the motion was carried ; and really he should not probably be for adding them all

to the Counties and Capital, but should be some to the large Towns of Birmingham, Manchester, &c. in order to make the Representation more equal.

He next touched on the offer of Mr. T. Pitt to give up his Borough of Old Sarum: It had a great sound, he said; but in all those flourishings which Gentlemen take, the House should consider well the nature of the proposal: The Honourable Gentleman had made an offer that he knew could not be accepted; therefore the merit was not so great as it appeared. There were many persons who were against the motion, because it was an innovation; yet they were perfectly agreeable to innovations; they were not against what was almost a new doctrine, at least it was for nearly an hundred years, he meant an interposition between the other House with respect to Money Bills there, merely for the spirit of opposition, persons attempted to meddle with what they were totally ignorant of, as was plainly to be seen by their conduct. There one Noble Lord argued about Lottery Tickets, in a manner that could not help being ridiculed, another Noble Lord attempted to prove that borrowing Money lessened a debt; in fact, it must be the case, where persons officiously meddle with what does not concern them, and talk of this in a place where they have no right.

The Right Honourable Secretary entered in a strong vindication of the Yorkshire and other Committee

Committees, from the sneer that had been cast on them by Mr. Powis, for the speculative points they had thrown out. He wished the House to recollect, that Sydney, Locke, &c. writing on the Constitution, had speculated far beyond what was practicable, yet much good resulted from their speculations, and they were great helps to practical beauty which we so much boasted of. He would not run into a long history of a crooked leg, in which the Gentleman finished lamely, and compare the Constitution of the Country to that of an individual; it was exactly the same; it was to be fed, it was to be nourished, it was to exist by nutriment, and would undoubtedly be liable to disorders. Suppose the patient had a fever and was to call for water, the physician would not be bound to comply with his request; but would mix up something that would nourish, that would be moist, and that would quench the thirst, and not to have the evil tendency that water would; so it was the duty of that House to administer for the relief of the Constitution, not exactly as called for by the wild extravagant doctrine of letting every man who was not a felon or a madman vote, but by taking some wise salutary steps that would redress the grievances complained of.

The Right Honourable Secretary entered very fully into the nature of the Constitution, expressed himself a warm friend for a Reform, saying mankind were made for themselves, not
for

for others ; and that was the best Government where the People had the greatest share in it. He could have wished, he said, that a Committee had been appointed similar to that moved for last year, as he did not think the present motion would go far enough ; but as he was confident it would be an amendment, he should give it his hearty support.

Sir C. Turner said, he was certainly for a Reform ; he was sure one was wanted, and he could have wished for a Committee to have been appointed in preference. He should vote for the present motion. He said the Noble Lord was wrong to mention, that neither the Towns of Leeds, Wakefield, or Halifax, had petitioned, they had all signed the County Petition. He was against an Aristocracy, though he said when a man was made a Peer, he looked upon him as out of Parliament and of no use, only a kind of lumber. He paid many compliments to the abilities of Mr. Beaufof ; after which,

The Lord Advocate rose, and stated, that last year he was against going into a Committee, because there was no specific motion made, now he was for the motion because he thought it a good one ; he always approved of County Members in particular, they were looked upon as the most honest, and the least liable to be corrupted, and therefore he gave it his hearty assent.

The Earl of Surrey said, he could have wished that a Committee had been appointed
in

in preference to the motion before the House ; but as he had only his choice left of voting for the motion, or for the order of the day, he certainly should give the preference to the Right Honourable Gentleman's motion ; and he hoped the public would not stop at that partial Reform, but persevere.

Mr. Sheridan spoke in favour of the motion, and wished that it had gone to shortening the duration of Parliaments.

Mr. Rigby spoke violently against the motion, ridiculed the Petitions, said they were but few, and obtained by partial means of a few persons calling on the Sheriff for a County Meeting ; at that Meeting none but friends were invited, and after the Petition was agreed on, they formed themselves into bodies, and called themselves a Quintuple Alliance, or some other foolish ridiculous name : he was himself, he said, a Burgess, and so was the Mover of the Question ; and it was his opinion, that Burgesses were full as respectable as County Members : He never would agree to any innovation or addition to the present number of the Commons, and declared that he would sooner see another Member added for Old Sarum, where there is but one house, than another Member added to the City of London, which had enough already.

Mr. Mansfield spoke against the motion on exactly the grounds of Lord North, and wondered much at the conversion of the Lord Advocate.

Mr.

Mr. Martin supported the motion, yet he did not think it was going far enough; he was for a similar motion to that of last year. Lord North and Mr. Rigby, he said, were much better companions at a table than they were in that House; but as the Noble Lord was going to the other House, he wished him well in private life, but thought he was the chief cause of our misfortunes.

Sir W. Dolben said, he was sorry to be obliged to vote against the motion, but as he was a warm supporter of the original motion last year, so he would have been now for the same motion; therefore could wish Mr. Pitt would withdraw his present, that he might, another day, make the original one for a Committee; and he had no doubt but he would meet with a good support.

Mr. W. Pitt, in a long and able Speech, took notice of the different objections, that had been made to the motion, remarked to the House, that last year the chief complaint was, that he had made no specific question—and this year, when a specific question was made, and such as he thought the least objectionable, the cry was, Why don't you vote for a Committee. He plainly saw he had so much to combat that he could not hope for success, but would persevere in his motion, and take the sense of the House upon it. He was extremely pointed at the manner in which Mr. Rigby treated the question, and concluded with declaring,

claring, that he thought he was in gratitude bound to return his thanks to the Right Hon. Secretary Fox, for his able, spirited, judicious, and generous support.

Mr. Rigby insisted, agreeable to the rules of the House, he had no right to reply, and was entering into a long remark himself of what had passed, when he was called to order by

The Marquis of Graham, who insisted that Mr. Pitt had a right to speak, as there had been another motion made (the order of the day) since he spoke first.

Mr. Rigby acknowledged the Noble Marquis was right, and was proceeding further, when the universal cry of the question was so loud from all parts, that he was obliged to leave off, and about half past two o'clock the House divided on the question for the order of the day, when there appeared,

Ayes 293, noes 149 ;—majority 144. Members present including the four Tellers and Speaker,

Upwards of 50 paired off, therefore it has been the fullest House known for many years.

END of the SECOND VOLUME.

